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SPIN

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On Tour

THE COOL ISSUE

What's Hot Gets Cold, but Cool Is Forever:
The '70s/De La Soul Consciousness Tech
Ice-T/John Cusack Coolest Record Labels
Ayrton Senna/Michael Stipe on Being a Cool Customer

Plus:
The Lifers' Group: Jail House Rap

News: Londonbeat, Sting's Rain Forest

The AZT Scam: The Plot Sickens

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Volume 7, Number 2

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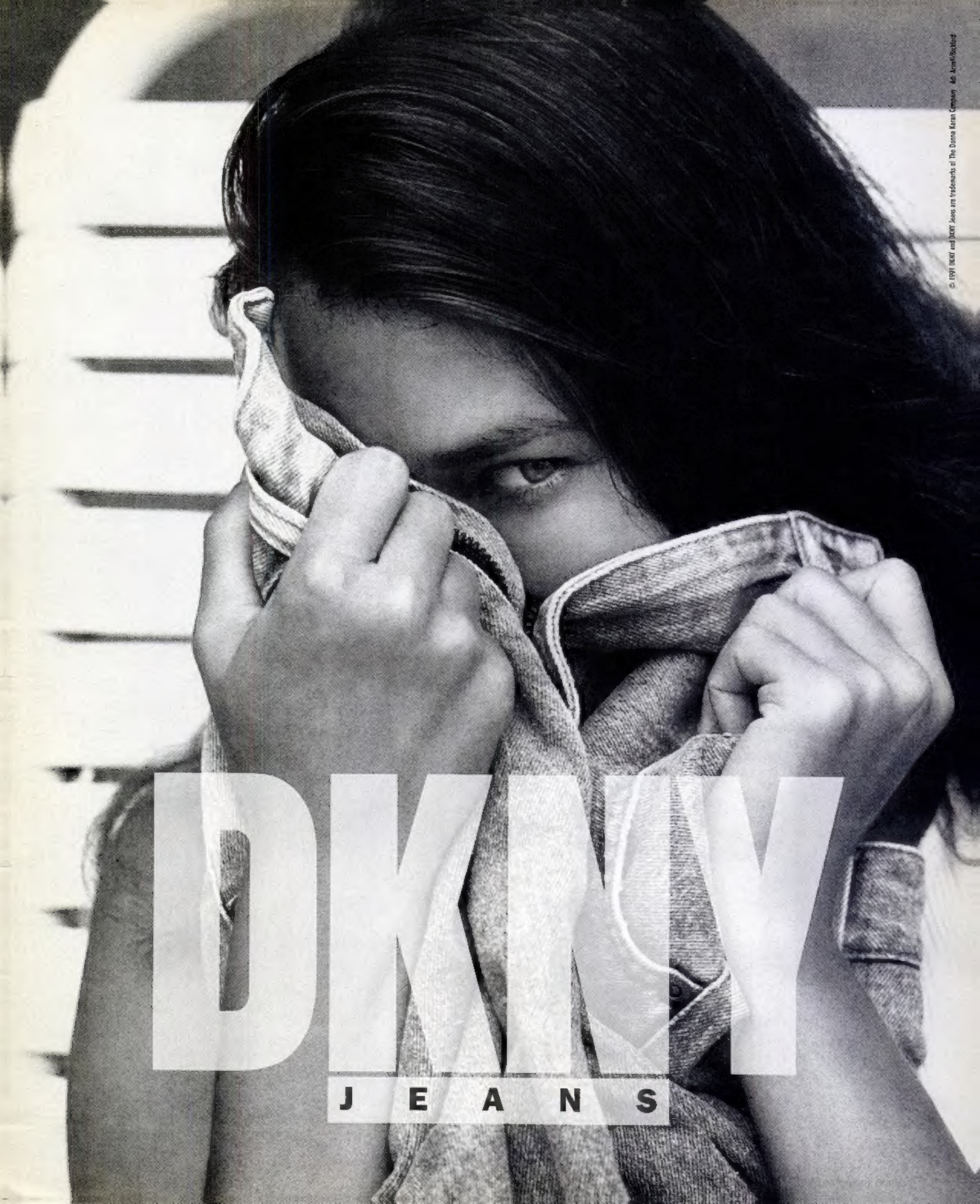
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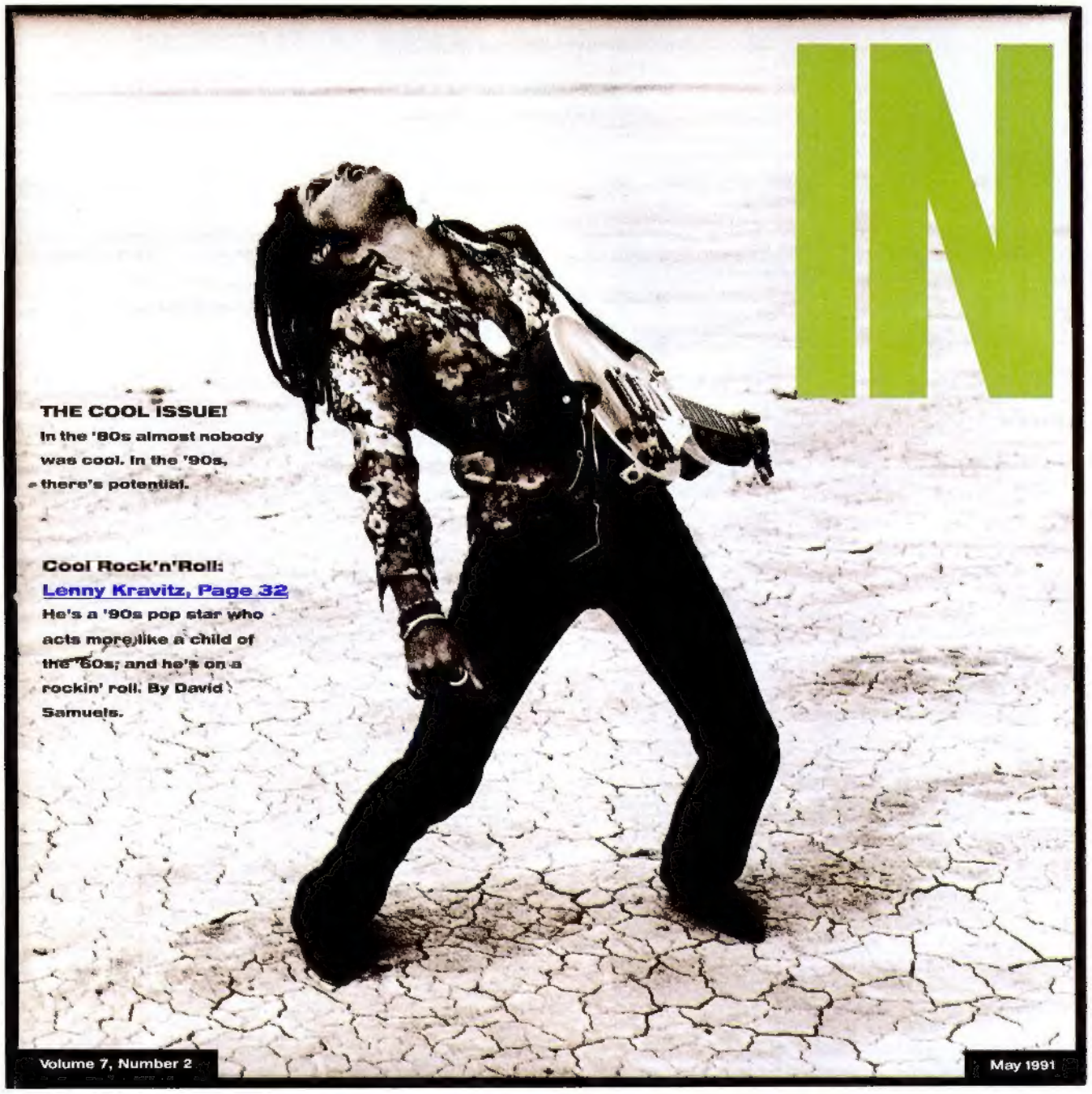

THE COOL ISSUE!
In the '80s almost nobody was cool. In the '90s, there's potential.

Cool Rock'n'Roll:
Lenny Kravitz, Page 32
He's a '90s pop star who acts more like a child of the '60s; and he's on a rockin' roll. By David Samuels.

Volume 7, Number 2 May 1991

8 Topspin

10 Point Blank Letters.

14 Flash Michael Stipe on cool consumerism; Kim Gordon on *Sassy*; the Lifers' Group; Ride; Londonbeat; Positive Force; Mind Funk; Sting's Rain Forest update; Missed Information; more.

31 WHAT'S COOL? Introduction by Celia Farber.

40 Cool Decade: The '70s By Celia Farber.

42 Cool Actor: John Cusack By Nathaniel Wice.

46 Just Cool: The Black Crowes By Bill Holdship.

50 Cool Technology: Toys for the Mind By Julian Dibbell.

52 Cool Hip Hop: De La Soul By Steven Daly.

57 Cool Record Labels By Jim Greer and Johan Kugelberg.

58 Cool Career Move: Ice-T in *New Jack City* By Scott Cohen.

60 Fast Cool: Race-Car Driver Ayrton Senna By Dean Kuipers.

65 AIDS The whole truth and nothing but the truth: Burroughs-Wellcome and the NIH's publicity campaign for AZT is a sham. By Celia Farber.

68 Antihero Why does the Pentagon try to hide American casualties of war from the public? One reporter got the inside story—by posing as a mortician at the Dover morgue. By Jonathan Franklin.

71 Spins Records.

81 Underground Jim Thirlwell, alias Foetus, is a man obsessed. By Dean Kuipers.

85 Indies/Classifieds

88 Cool Sex: S&M What else is there to say? Ask the Eulenspiegel Society. By Michael Musto.

Cover and above photographs by Anton Corbijn.

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IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE THIS WISCONSIN BAND CAPTURED FANS AND CRITICS ALIKE WITH ITS DISTINCTIVE HARMONIES. BRASH GUITARS AND SHEER WILL ON LOVE AND HOPE AND SEX AND DREAMS.
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TOP SPIN

Where were you when we won the war? I was in Minnesota attending the funeral service for my sister-in-law. Michelle Vu Phuong, a lively 30-year-old woman, had died of stomach cancer. She was from Vietnam. Her father had worked for the U.S. Army. On the verge of American defeat in 1975, he arranged for his entire family to flee the country. Michelle came to Minneapolis, where she met my brother at art school and was a wonderful addition to his life. A day after Michelle's funeral, I learned that the only brother of a friend had been blow to bits by an Iraqi land mine in Kuwait. These two deaths made me loathe the celebrations that followed our so-called total victory over Iraq. The closer you get to random death, the less you feel like celebrating a war that claimed upwards of 50,000 human lives.

Perhaps I am being too emotional. Surely there are things worth fighting and dying for. What about the humbling of a dictator? The liberation of an occupied country? The newfound authority of the United Nations? The vindication of the principle that aggression does not pay? The possibility of a new world order?

I don't doubt that these are worthy ends, only that we are much closer to achieving them. As of last August 2 not much progress had been made. As of that late date, the only people who cared about Saddam were senior officials of the Reagan and Bush administrations who pursued cordial relations with him, international businessmen who sold him everything from pari-mutuel betting equipment to poison gas, and human rights activists whose reports on Saddam were studiously ignored by the policymakers and the businessmen.

Now those same policymakers want us to believe that milliennial change is in the air. To say they are hypocrites is merely to summarize their job descriptions. Supporters of the war can reply to the hypocrisy charge by noting—accurately—that President Bush stood up to Saddam and that only a high-tech war waged by the United States could have laid the Iraqi dictator so low. What the supporters of the war cannot plausibly claim is that the destruction of Iraq had anything to do with respect for the rule of law or the protection of human rights.

It is encouraging that international political reality forced President Bush to seek the approval of the United Nations. Without the moral authority of the United Nations, it is unlikely that Bush could have routed Saddam. But it remains to be seen if the United Nations or international law will emerge from the war stronger than before. One test will be how the U.S. votes on U.N. resolutions about the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. Don't hold your breath.

Remember the idea of putting Saddam on trial for war crimes? Any international tribunal for Saddam would have set a precedent that could be next used against U.S. allies in Syria, Guatemala, or El Salvador. Their slaughter of political opponents rivals Saddam's—which is probably why the war crimes idea seems to have been dropped.

Indeed, Syria's President Hafez al-Assad is emerging as the new Saddam Hussein. Like his Iraqi predecessor, he is a dictator with an atrocious human rights record, but his cooperation with the schemes of senior U.S. policymakers has won him international respectability. Assad, according to *60 Minutes*, has collected some $3 billion in international aid since last August.

In Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, the war and the presence of thousands of Americans has created pressure for social change. Since Kuwait was liberated by U.S. forces that included more than 30,000 women, it would be nice if Kuwait women had the right to vote. But when 30 Saudi women recently staged a demonstration for the right to drive(!), they were all summarily fired from their jobs and subjected to petty harassment.

Maybe I'm obsessed with death, but those estimates of Iraqi casualties put to rest the lie that the war had been waged with surgical precision. The high-tech weaponry merely cleared the way for U.S. forces to use the low-tech weapons which actually won the war, weapons like cluster bombs and fuel-air explosives (FAE).

"The FAE works, in essence, by filling a wide area with combustible gas, then lighting a match," noted columnist Michael Kinsley. The resulting fireball sucked all oxygen out of the area, asphyxiating bystanders, detonating land mines, and destroying buildings. At the beginning of the war, the *New York Times* described the FAE as one of the more horrific weapons in Saddam's arsenal. At war's end, the U.S. was dropping 10,000-pound bombs containing fuel air explosives on Iraqi conscripts. "By then, who cared?" Kinsley asked.

Indeed, we are supposed to be positively inspired by the slaughter. Four congressmen recently told the *Washington Post* that they wanted to take advantage of the "the new national can-do spirit" generated by the war to improve our schools, clean up the environment, and expand our health care system. The reasoning seems to go like this: If we can humiliate a foreign despot by efficiently extinguishing the lives of his subjects, then we can do anything, even educate our kids!

What pathetic reasoning. What casual brutality. This is what we are asked to celebrate, and over the bodies of dead people. No can do.

—Jefferson Morley

Ayrton Senna, the legendary two-time Formula One Grand Prix winner, speeds into the Cool Issue as the fastest race-car driver on the face of the earth, *page 60*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF HARKROVE

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THE TRASH CAN SINATRAS
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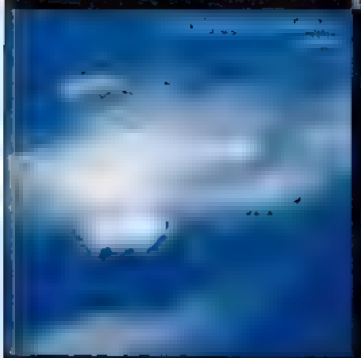


With a sold-out tour of America, this harmony-and-guitar driven band from Scotland is already one of 1991's great breakthrough stories.

"Nice name, guys. But you already knew that. Actually, these five English lads lay down an excellent brand of pub pop: simple, insinuating melodies, lyrics with propulsive good humor. Has the guy from Hoboken heard you yet?"

Jay Cocks
Time Magazine

"CAKE"–the hit debut album featuring *Obscurity Knocks* and *Only Tongue Will Tell*.
On London/Go Discs.

When Liverpool plays, people listen.

The La's

The La's hit like a much needed shot of adrenaline in the Liverpool underground and knocked the London music scene on its backside – Raw, shimmering guitars, infectious melodies and perfect pop symmetry shot three singles up the charts and pointed a new direction for British rock.

The La's

"This is the kind of wonderful record Ray Davies and the Kinks were making in the late '60s, while the rest of the world was jumping on the acid-rock bandwagon."

Greg Kot
Chicago Tribune

"The La's"– The debut album featuring the UK smash hits, *There She Goes*, *Timeless Melody* and *Way Out*.
On London/Go Discs.

PolyGram Label Group

POINT BLANK LETTERS

EDITED BY
NATHANIEL WICE

Making a List and Checking It Twice

Ten Things on Your Interview With R.E.M. [March '91]:

1. An anomaly is an ideal. (Without Tycho Magnetic Anomaly-1 we would not have had *2001: A Space Odyssey*.)
2. Leave U2 out of it. *Rattle and Hum* was not less masturbatory than R.E.M.'s *Dead Letter Office*. Both are great albums.
3. If the band is now as far from "college radio" as they are from the mainstream, then screw the former along with the latter.
4. If Peter Buck were a friend of mine we would never call each other. I don't like the phone either.
5. Thank you for not giving me the dirt and just telling me about their music.
6. I can't wait for Robbie Robertson's next album.
7. Nice pictures.
8. It was an excellent interview.
9. It was loose and grungy.
10. Thanks for a godlike, totally mondo, gnarly genius mackadocious piece. Y'all know what I mean?

Jerald Brewer
Bakersfield, California

Dear Tesla,
Contrary to what was recently printed in SPIN, I would love to be a member of your fine outfit. (And I work cheap.)

Bill Berry
R.E.M.
Athens, Georgia

Bad Influences

It's refreshing to see that SPIN realizes how underrated *Paul's Boutique* really is. This album not only wiped away any doubts of the Beasties' authenticity, but secured them a place among rap's elite.

Marc Lassie
Flint, Michigan

The most underrated album is the Altar Boys' *Gut Level Music*. They are so underrated you've never heard of 'em.

Gord Wilson
McChord Air Force Base
Tacoma, Washington

Editor's note: We've heard of them.

Modern Maturity

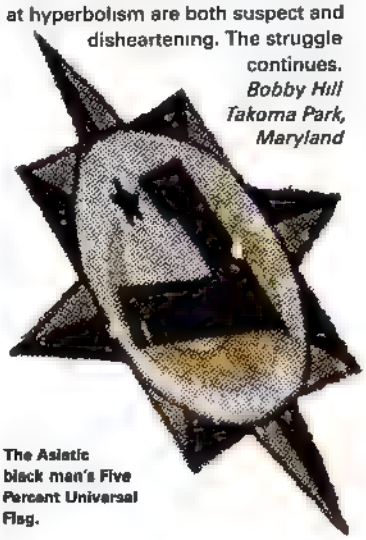
After reading the latest *Vanity Fair*, we have decided to cancel our subscription to the former and subscribe instead to SPIN. My husband, the Major, and I would rather read about Billy Idol fist fucking [September '90] (reminiscent of our honeymoon in Guam) than Farrah and Ryan vocally flatulating in their kitchen. Keep up the good work everybody. Thanks for keeping a couple of old swingers titillated!

Major and Ginger Danger
Burlington, Vermont

Black and White, and Read All Over

One really has to question the true motives behind your article titled "The Five Percent Solution" [February '91]. In the opening paragraph you state that the Five Percent Nation believes "the white man is the Devil." Then in the glossary you state, more correctly, that the Five Percenters believe that "any corrupt or dishonest person is the devil—white or black." Your initial and more prominent attempts at hyperbolism are both suspect and disheartening. The struggle continues.

Bobby Hill
Takoma Park, Maryland



The Asiatic black man's Five Percent Universal Flag.

Hypercolor™ is a metamorphic color system that changes color with your body temperature as well as your environment. This fashion-advanced dye lets you create an original design every time you wear it. You'll find Hypercolor™ in clothes by Generra and Select Corps that bear the Hypercolor™ emblem. So what are you waiting for? It's time you experienced it yourself. Hypercolor™. *Hypercool.*

Your article titled "The Five Percent Solution" by Charlie Ahearn was one of the most racist articles I've had the displeasure of reading in recent times.

Before this group of black militants starts worrying about the blond-haired, blue-eyed "negative race of devils," maybe the Five Percent Nation, the Nation of Islam, and the rest should worry about the black man on their corner selling crack to their kids.

As for Mr. Wise Intelligent, if he would like a war, he can enlist in the U.S. Marines, be sent to Iraq, and have all the war he wants. Instead of bitching about America, maybe he should just go back to Africa. Love it or leave it, baby!

This "whole weak race of people" has built the strongest country in the history of mankind, black or white, and we did it with people of every race, creed, and religion. Think you can do better in 200 years? Give it a shot, homeboy.

Glenn Smith
San Diego, California

But Seriously, Folks

More Vanilla Ice!

Just kidding.

Michael Zuniga
Shreveport, Louisiana

Life During Wartime

For a Marine presently on duty in the Middle East, your magazine is like a gift from the gods. I recently got the January '91 issue and I would like to say thank you for making a magazine that caters to the college/alternative scene. As the scene changes rapidly and I am out of touch with the world, it is great to have a magazine that will keep me up to date. "Iraq'n'Roll" [Backpage] was a great scenario—if only it could be that easy!

CPL Charles F. Rice, Jr.
Lost somewhere in the Saudi desert

In response to SPC Bryant Mlynczak's letter [Point Blank, March '91], the reason I won't "get the fuck out" of this country is because this is my home as much as it is yours, and if I think that the landlord of my home is fucking me up, I'm going to stay and fight for what is right. If your solution to America's problems is running away from them or going to some foreign land to kill innocent people in the name of the flag, then you are one sorry motherfucker.

I can't afford to fly to Saudi Arabia, so if you get home from Operation Desert Slaughter, come see me in Harlem with your flag and I'll burn it for you.

2 Black 2 Strong
New York, New York

What Makes It All Worthwhile

Congratulations to Daniel Fidler, who wrote the article on Ian MacKaye [Underground, February '91]. It's about time a trace of hardcore music appeared in your magazine. I've been waiting for it to show up for a long time.

For the record, Minor Threat was not punk. They were one of the first and best hardcore bands ever. Punk's dead. . . . Hardcore lives! Please help keep it that way.

Emily Clark
Manchester, New Hampshire

I don't always heed critics, especially film and music critics. I did, however, particularly like the way Lauren Spencer gave her impression of the Limbomaniacs' *Stinky Grooves* [Spins, December '90]. So much so that I bought the CD. It is everything she said it was and more. The cut "Porno" is a great parody of pornography. I bet even the PMRC would lighten up and chuckle upon hearing it. This music critic is looking forward to the next critique by Lauren.

John Gregoire
Brighton, Massachusetts

Your year-end issue [December '90] was very impressive, particularly your writers' round-up of the top albums of the year according to them. This would be a great feature to include more than once a year (e.g 'this month's top albums according to SPIN writers').

I have just become acquainted with your magazine's excellence.

Thank you for a legitimate alternative to *Rolling Stone*.

Adam Barnet
Miami, Florida

Thanks to University of Missouri students Delitha Morrow and Nancy Fisher, who helped with the March '91 college issue.

Address letters to: Point Blank, SPIN, 6 West 18th Street, New York, NY 10011. Include your name and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

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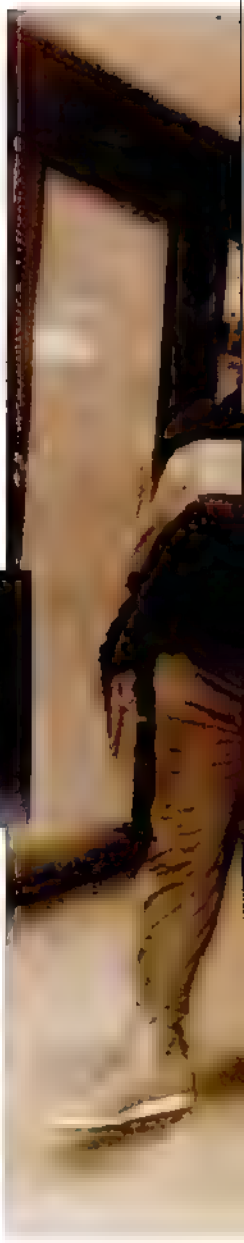


The Lifers' Group doesn't want you moving into its

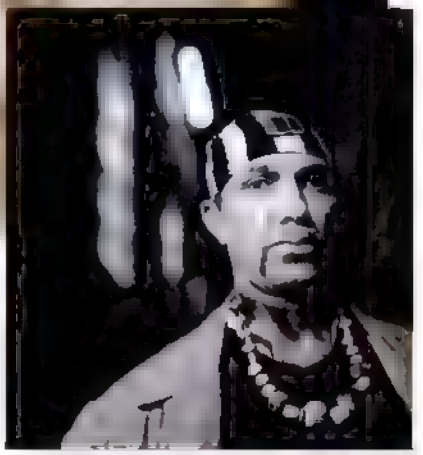
"Jail is hell and a cell is a coffin made of steel. This is the real deal": The Lifers' Group in the halls behind the walls of East Jersey State Prison.

neighborhood. The grass is greener on your side of the fence.

JAIL HOUSE RAP

I used to have a name, but now I got a number / I used to put suckers six feet under / Now I'm in jail / No longer a rebel / You can't tell me damn thing about the ghetto / I've been there / Now I'm in the belly of the beast
—Lifers' Group, "Belly of the Beast"

One of rap's main boasting and dissing points has always been whether or not each particular artist is truly "down" or "from the streets." From Eazy-E's somewhat convincing "gangsta" dissertations on his life in Compton to Vanilla Ice's "bullshit lies about his neighborhood" (as SPIN writer Bönz Malone puts it), rappers take glorious pride in their shady



backgrounds. But now along comes a group that doesn't need to win us over as to how "bad" they really are—a judge and a jury have already been convinced beyond a reasonable doubt

The Lifers' Group is a rap outfit made up entirely of inmates from East Jersey State Prison in Rahway, New Jersey. The musical project is an offshoot of the Lifers' Group organization, which was founded in 1975 to establish a better rapport between inmates and the outside world. In conjunction with the Juvenile Awareness Program and Scared Straight, the Lifers' Group is dedicated to getting a message across to young people about the harsh realities of prison life. "Learn at the expense of our sorrow" is the rappers' motto. The two main tracks that they recorded in a makeshift studio in the prison yard, "The Real Deal" and "Belly of the Beast," speak frankly of the cruelty, rape, murder, suicide, and other horrors that prisoners have to face every day

The record—organized by the vice president of the Lifers' Group, Maxwell Melvins, who has served 11 years of a life sentence for homicide —involves eight rappers, a singing quartet, a trumpet player, and a bass player. Each inmate wrote his own parts for the basic tracks, put together by Denmark's Solid Productions under the direction of Hollywood Records' Dave Funken-Klein. Hollywood Records is owned by Walt Disney Productions, but this ain't no *Little Mermaid* soundtrack:

I'mma stab the punk if he try to react / To the fact that he was dissed like dog shit / On the street he was tough, but in jail he's a bitch / Getting his ass kicked, suckin' dick

—"Belly of the Beast"

"This is strictly hardcore, man," explains rapper Rocky D, who has been behind bars on armed robbery charges for almost ten years. "Whichever way you decide to go in life is okay by us. But this is what you gonna get if you go the wrong way. Once you get here, there's no use in crying. It's hell. Life or death every time you come out of your cell. But you make your bed, and then you gotta lie in it."

"We're civilized people, and we're collaborating our thoughts so everyone can understand," says singer Knowledge Born, serving his fifth year on a manslaughter charge. "We ain't tripping out on no ego stuff, because when we're finished with this, we go back and get locked in a cell. This prison is a graveyard. You get a letter from your loved ones and it's like receiving flowers on your fucking grave. We're buried alive in here. That's why this record is hard. It's fucking *real*."

MARK BLACKWELL

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANNY CLINCH

RASH

COOL CONSUMERISM: RrighteousConsumption

Think before you spend your dollars. R.E.M.'s Michael Stipe tells you how.

Let's give a giant corporation grief.

There is a boycott against General Electric to try to stop them from manufacturing nuclear weapons. GE makes parts for the MX missile, Trident submarine, and B1-B bomber, and is one of the three largest U.S. military manufacturers. In 1988, GE grossed $5.7 billion from the Department of Defense. When NBC's *Today* show ran a segment on boycotts recently, they failed to mention the GE boycott. GE owns NBC.

So you say to yourself, "Big deal, how's my not buying a $1.29 GE light bulb going to make a difference?" Check it out: If the 2.3 million readers of SPIN each bought a light bulb every other month, after one year that would amount to 13,800,000 light bulbs—for a grand total of $17,802,000. A significant figure, even to the mega-evil GE. Throw in a couple hundred refrigerators, stoves, and washers and dryers and the ante is raised considerably. That's consumer power.

The point of this example is that *you can make a difference*. We live in a consumer society, a free society, where you as a consumer are free to buy what you want. The big dollar is the base of everything. You decide what you buy based on your needs and whims and desires. You bought this magazine. That means that, in a way, you agree with the contents enough to invest in it and support its continuation as a product. It also makes you responsible for it when you are done. Will it go to the landfill or get recycled? You are now held responsible for this pile of paper. That sucks, but that's part of it.

And GE is not alone. Boycott Westinghouse (more nukes), and Gillette: These guys staunchly refuse to stop testing on animals. Really cruel, unnecessary shit. They make, among other things, Right Guard and Soft & Dri deodorants, Silkience hair products, and Good News! and Daisy Plus disposable razors. Also, don't do business with the following oil companies: Shell (supports apartheid—they didn't pull out of South Africa when other companies did); Chevron (dumps in the San Francisco Bay); Texaco (just because of all those Bob Hope commercials—I hate him); and of course Exxon we all know about. I say drive less. Take a bus, ride a bike.

And keep informed. Here is a list of resources that are helpful and smart: periodicals—*The Nation*, *The Washington Spectator*, *In These Times*, *Utne Reader*, *World Monitor* (monthly from *The Christian Science Monitor*), and *Harper's Magazine*; books—*50 Simple Things You Can Do to Save the Earth* (EarthWorks), *Diet for a New America* (Stillpoint), and *State of the World* (W.W. Norton).

So what can you buy? Check out these responsible companies and good products: Ben & Jerry's, Dr. Bronner's Soap (a longtime hippie staple), Murphy's Oil Soap, Faultless Starch/Bon Ami Co., Arm & Hammer (the last three were your grandma's staples), latex-based paints, recycled paper products, halogen light bulbs (long-lasting, energy efficient), Aveda hair products, Aubrey Organics, and Tom's of Maine (the last three are intelligent hygiene and cosmetic companies).

To get started consuming cooly, contact Co-op America, 1-800-424-COOP (buying power), and Seventh Generation, 1-800-441-2538 (free cool catalogue).

I firmly believe that one of our strongest powers as individuals is the power of consumerism. It is through our choices as consumers that we cast our votes and give our approval to companies and policies. These are about the most important political, economic, environmental, and equal opportunity decisions you can make. Be aware of your influence and ability to affect positive change through your buying power. Now, let's go shop.

MICHAEL STIPE

SOUNDS FROM THE FRONT

Just because they were thousands of miles from home didn't mean our forces weren't rockin'.

Here on the home front, we're aware that Styx's career was resurrected by the war. But what else were the troops listening to? N.W.A's publicists claim they received bags of mail from the Middle East requesting Fuck tha Police shirts and other "gangsta shit." Slayer also reported an onslaught of fan mail from members of Operation Desert Storm—and there were rumors that the group's death metal was used to psych up fighter pilots. Brigitte Hoarau, a DJ on Armed Forces Radio in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, said the following were among the troops' top requests:

"Hit Me With Your Best Shot," Pat Benatar
"Another One Bites the Dust," Queen
"Knockin' on Heaven's Door," Guns N' Roses
"Don't Look Back," Boston
"Someone Saved My Life Tonight," Elton John

At a Riyadh commissary, where soldiers bought cassettes from vendors who had a halfway decent command of English, a PX employee told us that "*Maleeah Callees*" was selling especially well

"Mariah Carey?"
"Yes."
"Or Maria Callas?"
"Yes."
"Both?"
"Yes."

Having cleared that up, we asked for more details. The best-selling rap artists were M.C. Hammer, L.L. Cool J, Big Daddy Kane, Ralph Tresvant, and Guy. The country crowd was buying Randy Travis and Hank Williams, Jr. And the most popular "heavy metal" artists were Winger and Billy Idol.

BOB MACK

TOP PHOTO BY ANTON CORBIJN ILLUSTRATION BY ANASTASIA VASILAKIS

MIND OVER METAL

Breaking new ground in a mine field of metal, Mind Funk explodes onto the scene.

Sometimes, you've gotta believe the hype. Take Mind Funk, one of the more powerful new bands in recent memory. Arguably the name most bandied about in 1991 by those in-the-know, this fiery quintet combines metal crunch and innovative arrangements performed with heartfelt punk abandon. And as metal continues to become the proving ground for experimentation in the pop arena (e.g., Faith No More), this New York troupe is leading the genre toward the next extreme dimension.

Mind Funk began when bassist John Monte and lead guitarist Louis Svitek quit their gig with megalomaniac Billy Milano's thrash-joke band M.O.D. and hooked up with guitarist Jason Coppola (Monte's schoolboy chum). The next addition was drummer Reed St. Mark—who had left the once-legendary glam-ridden Swiss outfit Celtic Frost. They all shared a common yearning to break out musically—each having had little say in his previous act. They found a front man in Pat Dubar, best known as the ex-straight-edge voice behind Southern California hardcore ensemble Uniform Choice.

Understandably, Dubar was skeptical at first, figuring this was just another stupid death-metal band, but he decided to scam a free trip to the Big Apple nonetheless. The chemistry was immediate and intense, so much so that West Coast dude Dubar packed up and moved to suburban New Jersey. Needless to say, news of this monster unit spread like wildfire, and within a few gigs they were inked to Epic Records.

Originally called Mind Fuck—an apt description of its brazen sonic assault—the band publicly altered its name to avoid unnecessary controversy (though privately members still answer to the earlier name). Their self-titled ten-song debut, featuring the brain-jarring video and single "Bighouse Burning," is brutal, believable, and destined for greatness.

Vocalist Dubar explains the Mind Funk ethos: "We write music that you can dance, fight, and fuck to. As weird as it sounds, our trip is based on fucking with people's heads, whether they get it or not. The music and the emotion is more important than the bottom line, and I honestly believe that people can see through all the bullshit. Love us or hate us, what you're gonna get is something that's heavy, honest, groovy, and intense."

STEVEN BLUSH

J&B in a crowded bar.

J&B Scotch Whisky. Blended and bottled in Scotland by Justerini & Brooks, fine wine and spirit merchants since 1749

J&B Blended Scotch Whisky, 43% & 40% Alc. by Vol., Imported by The Paddington Corporation, Ft. Lee, N.J. © '99

LONDON CALLING

"The thing about London," says George Chandler of Londonbeat, "is it's such a fad place. Lots of fads."

Londonbeat should know. As one of the latest British acts to invade the U.S. via MTV, Londonbeat would be easy to dismiss as another imported flavor of the moment. The circa-1983 new-wave hairdo of guitarist Willy M doesn't help dispel this impression, and worse, the band's first single, "I've Been Thinkin' About You," is too damn catchy. There must be a gimmick.

In fact, there isn't. Londonbeat is a marketing man's dream: three swift black dudes and a goofy white guy who sound a little like the Fine Young Cannibals. And while they may look like fresh young faces,

the members of Londonbeat have been around.

"I was ten years old when Elvis hit," says Chandler. "I've seen everything that's ever happened in rock'n'roll. We try to incorporate the good things but make them more '90s—turn 'em inside out and create something unique."

Chandler would like emphasized the quality songwriting in his band, yet he realizes that some of Londonbeat's success can be attributed to looks: "You can't just have music in London; you also have to have a way of dressing as well. And Londonbeat probably couldn't have happened any place but London."

Chandler, like co-vocalist Jimmy Helms, is actually an American who has lived in England since the early '70s. "One of the reasons we're called Londonbeat is simply to pay homage to the city," he says, adding, "and we thought that to ever succeed in America, the fact that *London* is in the name might somehow be a plus."

BOB MACK

DO THE RIDE THING

What is it about Ride that has so quickly endeared the band to the throngs that flock to its native U.K. gigs, showering the young foursome with flowers? Is it the band's jangly '60s hooks combined with the tug-of-war between Mark Gardener's and Andrew Bell's guitars? Could it be Gardener's boy-in-a-dream vocals or the fact that he could pass for Ian McCulloch's younger brother?

"We never really sat down and thought about it," says Gardener. "We're just doing something we feel good about."

The work regimen and rapid-fire discography that fueled Ride's beeline to success is quite a phenomenon. Gardener, Bell, drummer Lawrence Colbert, and bassist Steve Queralt formed Ride while studying at Oxford. They all relocated to London in 1989, and that January Ride condensed half a decade's worth of gigging and creative output into a self-titled debut EP on U.K. indie label Creation (home of My Bloody Valentine and the House of Love). Within four months the second EP was released, *Play*. By September, the two records had been combined into the stateside *Smile*. A two-month respite produced *Nowhere*, the band's first long-player. A sprawling collection of hypnotic, surrealist popscapes, *Nowhere* is a departure from the rudimentary jingles that marked the band's earlier EPs.

"We redefine ourselves each time we record," says Gardener. "That's where we get the thrill. We're always doing something new."

The band's latest EP, *Today Forever*, was written and recorded in two weeks. "We're just trying to get the songs out as soon as we've got them," Colbert explains. "To knock them out as they come along in easy-to-swallow packages."

STEVE MARTIN

JUNGLE THRASH

The thrash band Sepultura may prove to be the most successful act to come out of Brazil since Sergio Mendes (of "Girl From Ipanema" fame). The band recently played the megafestival Rock in Rio II, where headliners included Guns N' Roses and Prince. "We were afraid of playing in front of a hundred thousand people," admits front man Max Cavalera, "but they were very supportive." To put it mildly.

When the promoters scheduled Brazilian pop singer Lobago to follow Sepultura, the audience didn't respond well. "Everybody threw things at him," says Cavalera. "He left the stage after one song, and Megadeth had to play. Our fans are very violent, very fanatic. They fight for the band. We're something Brazilian kids can believe in and trust, because we're talking about the fucked-up things that go on in our country, about reality."

Sepultura's fans tend to be extremely poor. Inflation is out of control in Brazil and, according to a recent NBC news show, homeless kids are being murdered by vigilantes. This is Sepultura's world. The name means *coffin* in Portuguese, and two major themes of the band's songs are schizophrenia and war. *Arise*, Sepultura's latest disc, seethes with rage; the album easily out-Slayers Slayer.

If playing Rock in Rio II made Sepultura superstars in their native country, the band didn't stick around to see it. Sepultura left two days later for a promo tour of Europe. "Basically we still have the same life, though," says Cavalera. "We still take the subway to the rehearsal hall. My goals are not to be rich or famous. We want to live for music; do nothing but play."

DAINA DARZIN

Actual Size
Actual Taste
JOLLY RANCHER
The Great Taste Of Fruit. Squared.

COOL MAGAZINE: *SASSY*

Sonic Youth's bassist salutes the coolest teen mag this side of puberty.

How Six Girls Overhauled Their Boyfriends
What the Heck Are We Doing in the Persian Gulf?
It's Your Hair—Color It
—from the February '91 cover of* Sassy *magazine

The double-page spread "What Now," compiled by Christina, says everything there is to say about *Sassy*. 1) This month's *Sassy* glossary definition, No. 35, is "*dust*: verb meaning to get rid of, dump. Usage: 'My boyfriend was treating me like *dirt*, so I dusted that old troll at the prom.' " 2) "Cute Band Alert" is a blurb on the Lemonheads (my greatest thrill was flipping through an old issue and seeing the tagline "There is a band named Cows and their album is called *Daddy Has a Tail*"). 3) "What the Little Racist Is Up to Now" is an update on John Metzger, the 22-year-old white Aryan resistance leader previously interviewed in March '89. 4) And then there's this: "I wonder what sweet little Balthazar Getty sees in that dirty old tattoo-covered Drew Barrymore." Although *Sassy*'s idealism is part of its appeal, I found this knock at little Drew a little uncool—as a 15-year-old recovering alcoholic, she's much more '90s-identifiable than the Lisa Bonet, Jr., who's on the cover

Still, I'm a sucker for the magazine's quest for being socially conscious on every level. And *Sassy* promotes a multicultural aesthetic: In the August '90 issue the *Sassy* staff picked Eagle Eye Cherry (Don Cherry's son and Neneh Cherry's brother) as the ideal cute boy. The readers rejected Eagle Eye, the archetypal mulatto dreamboat in a Baja shirt, opting instead for a beefy white homeboy in a Stüssy hat. The predominantly white middle-class readership is ready to accept marketed Afro-hipsterism but not the real thing. (Then again, under the guise of promoting fashion as a means of individual expression, *Sassy*'s "global" look à la Urban Outfitters may be just a new way of selling earth tones.)

The best thing about *Sassy*, though, is that it feels like it's written by your hip older sister, not your mother. Whereas *Seventeen* comes out of the '50s, *Sassy* is a product of the '80s/'90s. Other magazines that try to emulate *Sassy*'s personal approach feel like falsies. Where else can you read advice about whether or not to shave your pubic hair, or find answers to questions such as "Does cough syrup have calories; what about toothpaste?"

Although *Sassy*'s supposed to be for girls, my favorite column is "Help for Him." (One boy writes, "How can I make my girlfriend stop throwing up?") And *Sassy* seems to have a large boy readership. Thurston always buys it on the pretext of giving it to me—but he reads it first. I even hear they're starting a magazine for boys called *Dirt* (not to be confused with the faux alternative fanzine put out by Warner Bros.). Sounds juicy.

KIM GORDON

The Politics of Punk

Positive Force is a Washington, D.C., activist group that was formed over five years ago to restore to the punk movement its all but forgotten political and social ideals. Mark Andersen, 31, cofounder of the group, explains: "I came to D.C. in '84 and saw all sorts of problems. I felt like punk had betrayed itself, become stupid, violent, and conformist."

Andersen read about a now-defunct Las Vegas branch of Positive Force and started a local chapter in 1985 during D.C.'s Revolution Summer, as it was coined by local alternative bands, in an effort to recover the sense of community, ideals, and purpose that had made the punk movement so inspiring.

"We wanted to create a community where our vision could be lived out," Andersen says. "We wanted to go back to punk's roots and keep it happening, intelligent, and moving. To bring about a sophisticated mixture of politics and music."

Positive Force has staged over 90 benefit shows, raised over $100,000 for charity, and assembled a compilation album of D.C. bands called *State of the Union*, with all proceeds going to the ACLU and the Community for Creative Nonviolence. Members work at homeless shelters, deliver food to the needy, and organize teach-ins. In 1987, they bought a group living space that houses roughly 13 people and hosts weekly meetings.

In January, Positive Force staged a "punk percussion" protest in front of the White House. Over 1,000 protestors banged on anything they could get their hands on and were treated to a show by D.C.'s Fugazi.

"I can't expect a grand-scale revolution that will make everything wonderful," Andersen concluded recently. "What I believe in right now is that I can join together with people in my immediate area and make life a little better. . . . I find strength in that potential for change."

DANIEL FIDLER

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NASH MUSIC NEWS

Sting's Rain Forest Revisited

After a rocky start, Sting's Rain Forest Foundation (RFF) is coming through with an agenda of long-term programs to help protect the ravaged rain forests of Brazil. "We're in this for the duration," Sting has insisted repeatedly.

The project began in 1987 when Sting went into the jungles of Brazil to meet with Amazon Indian leaders. "They appealed to Sting to help protect the rain forest, in particular the area where [Indian leader] Raoni's village is," says Larry Cox, the RFF's executive director. Sting agreed to raise whatever sum of money was needed to demarcate the Xingu Park region, an area the size of England

José Sarney, then President of Brazil, told Sting the demarcation would cost $1 million. Sting went on an international publicity tour with Raoni to announce the forming of the Rain Forest Foundation. They raised $1.1 million, but when Sting and Raoni went back to Sarney's office, the story had changed. Yet another study was needed, the President said. "At that point," Cox says, "Sting told him that when the demarcation occurred, the money would be there. But not before.

"Sting would be the first one to admit he was a bit naive about what was involved. He realized it wasn't just a question of raising money—it was also politics." The current President, Fernando Collor de Mello, has shown himself to be more genuinely concerned about preserving the rain forest than his predecessor, and the RFF expects the demarcation order soon.

But that's not enough in itself, Cox says. "Once demarcation occurs, preserving the forest will still require a lifetime of work. Demarcation doesn't stop mining and lumber companies from putting pressure on the Indians to sell the forest, or sell rights to minerals in exchange for money."

Only the Indians can protect the demarcation once it occurs, and to do this, they must have some political savvy. This is where the RFF comes in: In Brazil, about $640,000 has funded programs—overseen by a panel of native environmentalists, lawyers, and human-rights activists—which collectively aim "to empower and educate the Indians to protect their land." For example, the RFF helped to found a village on the border of Xingu Park to make sure ranchers and miners working nearby don't exceed the areas they have rights to.

At press time, the RFF was about to hold a benefit concert at Carnegie Hall, and expected to raise over $200,000 in ticket sales. In Brazil, demarcation papers still await President de Mello's signature.

STACI BONNER

THE RISE OF RHYME CARTEL

Sir Mix-A-Lot, whose previous two LPs, *Swass* and *Seminar*, reached sales in the millions and whose single "Posse on Broadway" put Seattle rap at the top of the national charts, has left the local Nastymix label to form his own company, Rhyme Cartel. The new label has scheduled a series of releases for the spring, including Mix-A-Lot's third LP, *Possessed*.

"My main reason for leaving Nastymix," says Mix-A-Lot, "was to get creative control over my product. I have a difference of opinion with how most labels promote rap. People don't take it seriously. What's happening with rap is it's all being lumped together, and that's scary. Rap is more informative than any music ever was. So the way these companies are going about promoting it is an injustice. You can't expect people to buy it because they show an African medallion or a profanity sticker."

Mix-A-Lot is one of seven rap artists mentioned in an alleged Department of Justice memorandum, citing groups whose music advocates violence against law-enforcement officers and women. Mix A Lot says, "That surprised me. I didn't say, 'Fuck, fuck, fuck, kiss my ass,' in 'My National Anthem.' That song was to just let people know that you may find one of us in office one day. I think that scares them. I'm doing a follow-up on *Possessed* called 'F.B.I.' which stands for Fear of Black Intelligence."

The announcement for the debut of Rhyme Cartel was a foreboding ad in *Billboard* that showed Mix-A-Lot and posse shrouded by fog and flagged with the motto, "The Cartel Cometh, Not Here to Offend, Here to Defend."

"The image of this label will always be a bit mysterious," Mix-A-Lot offers. "It will be obvious that it's a rap-owned label. You look at Madonna, look at Prince, look at any major artist, and they have an image. You know their sound, their style, and their look. I don't see that in rap right now."

RICHARD WHITE

Slim Gaillard

His father named him Bulee, but for 74 years the world called him Slim. In his February obituary photo, the legendary hipster Slim Gaillard looks like a rangy, white-bearded Fiji islander. One of his sons likened him to "a cartoon character—everybody loved him."

In a career that spanned six decades he perfected the art of making audiences feel good. In the early '30s his act consisted of singing, tap-dancing, and guitar playing—often all at once. He could play the piano with his hands upside-down. He played sax. He played vibes. He did stand-up comedy. He wrote "jive" songs with a unique vocabulary of Slim-isms like *vout* and *oroonie*. A sampling of typical Gaillard tongue-in-both-cheeks titles: "Cement Mixer," "Avocado Seed Soup Symphony," and "Matzoh Balls."

He recorded with jazz greats like Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and Thelonious Monk. He played clubs and did movies (*Hellzapoppin, Go, Man, Go, Planet of the Apes*, etc.) and even some TV (*Roots*). He had some down times (managing a motel in San Diego in 1962) but always bounced back into entertainment. His last known recording was a rap single with the Dream Warriors

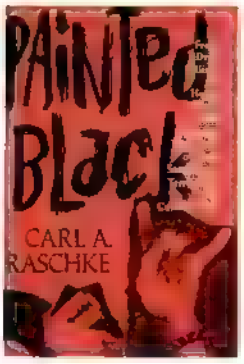
DAVID REDFERN/RETNA

An unfailingly cheerful entertainer who grew up in an era when black Americans were called Negroes and openly disdained, he answered discrimination not with hate and rage, but with humor and forbearance

DEAN CHRISTOPHER

ROCKETEER
JUNE 21
© DISNEY

THE COLD ROCK STUFF



Painted Black

Only in these days of reactionary politics and overt cultural censorship could one publish a piece of "investigative journalism" like *Painted Black. From Drug Killings to Heavy Metal—The Alarming True Story of How Satanism Is Terrorizing Our Communities.* "Researched" and poorly written by self-proclaimed authority on satanism Carl A. Raschke, a professor of religious studies at the University of Denver, *Painted Black* is a hysterical study of occultism, with much attention paid to heavy metal's relationship with devil worship, violent crime, and deviant psychodrama. Some of Raschke's most absurd claims are: "The aesthetics of heavy metal videos are often copied from Nazi propaganda films"; "Heavy metal is audio pornography at extreme decibels"; and that Slayer is an acronym for Satan Laughs As You Eternally Rot. Perfect coffee-table book for members of the PMRC. *At fine bookstores everywhere.*

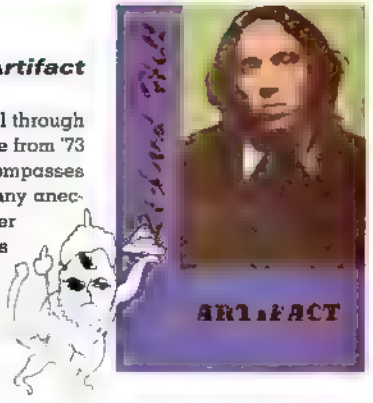
THESE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE THINGS

Hotline of Doom

Whatever the source of your gloom, the Society for Secular Armageddonism has just the antidote. The San Francisco-based organization's Hotline of Doom is dedicated to "promoting public awareness of the coming of the end of the world"—and feeling *good* about it. The service offers callers a recorded message—set to ominously tolling bells—that describes some of the "thousand points of blight arising from humanity's fundamental incompetence." Doom's basic belief: "Many global threats are rushing us toward apocalypse, and emergency action is needed now to delay the inevitable. In short, it's totally hopeless; don't give up." The listener then gets a roll call of activist groups working to address particular problems. Upcoming Doom announcements will designate dates for this year's impending Doom Awareness Week and the 1991 Global Village Idiot Awards. Call *(415) 673-DOOM.*

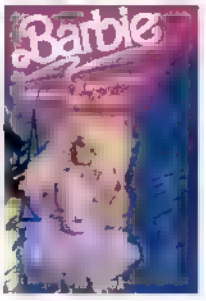
Artifact

This little (2.5" x 4") book is a diary trip by Richard Hell through the underbelly of the New York underground rock scene from '73 to '80. *Artifact* is an apt description for a work that encompasses the inner turmoil of Hell's brain—as illustrated by funny anecdotes about his band, the Voidoids, and touching observations on the people he came in contact with. Includes vintage black-and-white photos of Hell and friends hanging out in various Lower East Side locations. A bite-size slice of CBGB club culture. *Hanuman Books, P.O. Box 1070, Old Chelsea Station, New York, NY 10113.*



Barbie

Although she's now a member of the thirtysomething generation, Barbie still gets around. Lined up head to toe, the almost 600 million Barbie dolls sold since she was first introduced would circle the globe more than 3½ times. Mattel's newest releases include "Bathtime Fun Barbie" and "Lights and Lace Barbie." And this September, Shani, the African-American Barbie, will tap the ethnic market with resculpted facial features and gold threads instead of Barbie's traditional pink apparel. But at a recent Barbie summit in New York it was skimpily clad, white-bread "Superstar Barbie" who sang the "Together We Can Do It" single from her new album, *The Look*, to the M.C. Hammer doll (which a press release calls Barbie's "new celebrity friend"). Ken was unavailable for comment.



Nancy

The Nancy zombie propped up in today's newspapers by the United Feature Syndicate is nothing more than a cheap swipe from the late great cartoonist Ernie Bushmiller. With Zen and zing, Bushmiller spent 44 years looking for and finding the perfect visual gags. Look up *comic* in the *American Heritage Dictionary*, and you'll find one of his strips. Now, his manic minimalism can be found in themed collections, such as *Nancy Eats Food*, which are as zany as their subject. *$7.95 each from Kitchen Sink Press, No. 2 Swamp Road, Princeton, WI 54968*

Compiled by Mark Blackwell, Steven Blush, Michael Brennan, Gavin Edwards, Miguel Giron, and Lauren Spencer.

Super Driver

Sure SPIN's a cool mag, but it does, of course, have one major drawback: You just can't enjoy it and drive your truck at the same time. That's not the case, however, with *Super Driver: The Original Trucker Tape Magazine.* According to publisher Jim Stein, the monthly three-hour package (two cassettes) is designed as an alternative to radio, which he says can get "exasperating and harassing" for the nation's 2.2 million truckers. The friendly tapes include humor, interviews, trucker news, safety tips, trivia games, contests, and just about anything you'll need to make that long haul seem a little shorter. Grab a copy at your neighborhood truck stop or call *(800) 63-SUPER.*

ILLUSTRATION TOP RIGHT BY JOHN GIORDANI

Is It Live?

Our newest and best.

Goldilocks: Thurston Moore, Sonic Youth's guitarist, is up for sale. A lock of his blond hair is on sale at Pier Platters record store in Hoboken, New Jersey, for $100. This treasure is packed inside a seven-inch single from the band STP, whose guitarist, Julie Cafritz, is responsible for removing the curl from Thurston's head.

MISSED INFORMATION

Dove Bar: When Neil Young took his show to West Point last February, the academy imposed some restrictions on the stage set, which features a backdrop of a peace sign with doves flying over it. West Point informed Neil Young's management that the peace sign could not be displayed, adding that no swearing would be allowed onstage. • **Thanks for Nothing:** A device invented by a company in New York called ZaPproof makes it impossible for viewers watching rented movies to fast-forward through those annoying commercials at the beginning of tapes. • **In Excess:** M. C. Hammer's video "Here Comes the Hammer," which features a 21st century haunted house complete with tripped-out costumes and a James Brown look-alike, is the most expensive ever filmed—a cool $1.4 million. • **Don't Tip the Boat:** Primus is releasing *Sailing the Seas of Cheese* this May, with guest appearances by Tom Waits and Faith No More drummer Mike Bordin. Both Primus and members of Faith No More will be appearing in *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure II*, due out this summer. • **Stoned Again:** The city of Dallas may not allow director Oliver Stone to use the Texas School Book Depository's sixth floor—where Lee Harvey Oswald allegedly took aim at President Kennedy—for his new film *JFK*. "I don't want the exhibit closed for any period of time—for them or anyone else," said county commissioner Christopher Semos. • **Soon to Be a Major Motion Picture:** On May 17, Madonna will hit the big screen with *Truth or Dare*. The documentary includes backstage and onstage footage from the Japan leg of her *Blond Ambition* tour. • **A Tad Much:** Tad Doyle, the enormous lead singer of the Seattle band TAD, will make his acting debut in Cameron Crowe's (*Fast Times at Ridgemont High* and director of *Say Anything*) new film, *Singles*. It is about the Seattle music scene and stars Bridget Fonda and Matt Dillon. • **F#@ &% City Warning Labels:** Quincy, Massachusetts, has implemented a fine of $100 to anyone caught using "profane or obscene" language in public. The ordinance caused radio station WZOU to protest by airing a caller who repeated the word *damn* for three hours straight. • **Breaking Records:** Disc jockeys Ben Williams and Chris Hall of ACRN, Athens, Ohio's college radio station, have raised money for the local AIDS Task Force by staying on the air for 119.3 hours straight, breaking the previous record of 99.3 hours. • **On the Road/Festival Update:** The Lollapalooza Tour will get under way this summer with a lineup that at press time included Jane's Addiction, Siouxsie and the Banshees, the Butthole Surfers, Living Colour, and Gang of Four. • Grindcrusher tour: Earache Records' band Godflesh, which has repeatedly been stopped from entering the country due to visa complications, has made it to our shores and is in the midst of a 40-city tour with Napalm Death and Nocturnus. • RNA Records (Rhino Records' new artist label) is cosponsoring a tour with Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream and the Rock the Vote foundation called the Real Music Revue. With Exene Cervenka, Steve Wynn, Clive Gregson, and Christine Collister, the show is a response to the practice of using taped music during live shows. The tour promises "all-natural music, with every note played and sung before your very eyes."

The Sound and the Fury: John Mellencamp is putting final touches on *Falling From Grace*, the film he directed and starred in for Columbia Pictures. Currently he's rehearsing for a new album, *Whenever We Want It*, for release in September. Mellencamp says, "The album has nothing to do with the movie. People may think this is like a Prince *Purple Rain* thing. It's not. It's an album and a movie. Hard on, no hard on. Two different things."

John Mellencamp and daughter

Thanks for the Memories: When Andrew Wood, Mother Love Bone's lead singer, died last July, his roommate and Soundgarden lead vocalist, Chris Cornell, was moved to write two songs in his memory. Those tunes, "Say Hello to Heaven" and "Reach Down," appear on a new album, *Temple of the Dog*, featuring musician Mike McCready, Soundgarden drummer Matt Cameron, and Mother Love Boners Stone Gossard and Jeff Ament.

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WHAT'S COOL?

Lenny

Lenny Kravitz is on his way to becoming the first pop star of the multicultural '90s. DAVID SAMUELS visits the rising disciple of cool.

The strangest freedom we have is that of choosing the stories we need to hold our lives together. We shuffle these stories like cards in a deck. Cards disappear, cards are lost. To replace them, we roll history flat and cut it to order. History becomes interesting not for what it says about the past but for the needs it fills in the present. Such thoughts are natural to any discussion of Lenny Kravitz, a pop star for the '90s whose new record, *Mama Said*, sounds like it was recorded in a moving car somewhere between New York and Detroit in 1968, when Lenny Kravitz was 4 years old. "Give Peace a Chance," re-recorded by Kravitz for our most recent war with lyrics by his friend Sean Ono Lennon

Cool Rock 'n' Roll

Photographs by Anton Corbijn

The '60s, to Lenny Kravitz, are not so much a part of the past but

(and not included on *Mama Said*), originally came out when Lenny was 5. Madonna's explicit video of her recording of Kravitz's "Justify My Love" was banned by MTV, an experience that earned Madonna the chance to discuss censorship on ABC's *Nightline*.

That old and new story lines intersect in the air around Lenny Kravitz is the result not of careful marketing but of a life lived in several places at once. Taken separately, these lives—the fallen lover, the flower child, the socially conscious musician—are cliché. What is original about Lenny Kravitz is the particular combination of these lives, each of them his own, and a remarkably expressive, classically trained voice that equals any in rock'n'roll.

When his lyrics begin to approach the depth of his music, and on *Mama Said* they sometimes almost do, the multicultural '90s will have a pop star to call its own. "More Than Anything in This World," a song about loss that sounds like sex, stays with you for a while. The second version of "Fields of Joy" balances distortion with peaceful hippie lyrics to suggest both painful disintegration and a holding together. Loss and desire surge across the new album, a document of the first waking day after love.

LENNY Kravitz likes television. His mother, the actress Roxie Roker, played Mrs. Willis on *The Jeffersons*. His father, Sy Kravitz, is a retired CBS executive. "I'd be home sick from school," Lenny says, remembering his stateside childhood from the Bahamas where he is now recording, "and I'd watch the whole cycle, you know: Bugs Bunny, *The Little Rascals*, *Batman*, *I Dream of Jeannie*, *Bewitched*, *Gilligan's Island*, *H.R. Pufnstuff*, nine in the morning to six at night."

Stephen Smith, Lenny's thirtyish manager, and Smith's daughter, Skye-Anne, 2 years old and blond, convey a discrete sense of well-being. Steve asks if Lenny remembers a girl who called earlier, claiming they sang the *Batman* song together as children. Lenny laughs. "Sure I remember her. I don't remember *Batman*. I remember we had a lemonade stand together once. At the end of the day she divided up the money, gave me all the pennies. I threw a fit."

Steve Smith nods, unable to suppress a laugh. Lenny laughs, too. "I wanted the silver, man." His voice drops a full octave. "No one takes my money," he growls, shaking his head. "I'm gonna give her a call."

Lenny Kravitz is immediately appealing, an offhand mix of arrogance and honesty, the friend in high school who compares himself to Jimmy Page, but in the next breath says how much he loves *Catcher in the Rye*.

"I stopped reading in maybe eighth grade," Lenny says. "*The Metamorphosis* by Kafka, just the description of how he changes, locked inside his room. I know it sounds trite, but I really dug J.D. Salinger—*Catcher in the Rye*, 'A Perfect Day for Bananafish,' *Franny and Zooey*." His favorite band in junior high was Kiss.

"Since then," Lenny says, "I guess I've done most of my learning from records: *Electric Ladyland*, *Led Zeppelin*, *Houses of the Holy*, a lot of Bob Marley and Stevie Wonder, the Plastic Ono Band." We throw bits of songs back and forth. " 'Mother.' " " 'I Found Out.' " " 'Cold Turkey,' man, 'Cold Turkey,' " Lenny says. "I sung that at the Lennon tribute in Liverpool—throwing my shit all around the stage, you know, after Kylie Minogue comes out and sings 'I Want to Hold Your Hand.' " One catches in his eye the gleam of a man who struck a blow for the true faith.

Despite his bent for television, Lenny Kravitz doesn't particularly like videos, his or anyone else's. "I wish MTV didn't exist," he says. "I make music. I wish it was just you and the record, the way it feels with your eyes closed: the music, and the images in your head." Coffee-cream skin and stoned snake-charmer eyes, Lenny Kravitz wrinkles his nose at video, an ugly smell from across the ocean.

WHAT MAKES LENNY KRAVITZ BELIEVABLE IS THE TEXTURE OF A childhood lived in a small plot of ground on Manhattan's Upper East Side, 10 yards from Fifth Avenue and 50 or so yards from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where, for a small group of artists and wealthy liberals in the '70s, distinctions of class erased distinctions of race and gender.

"It was the absolute happiest time of my life," Lenny recalls. "The museum was like my backyard, I'd wander around and get lost, take notes, buy the postcards. I'd take art lessons at the children's museum—remember when they had that downstairs? My favorite was the Arms and Armor exhibit. I also loved the Museum of Natural History, across the park, with the dinosaurs. Stegosaurus, brontosaurus, the one with the plate on its head and the horns—triceratops. I had the plastic models, you know, of all of them."

Lenny's father is Jewish, his mother is black. "I was the only kid on my block with an Afro and a yarmulke—when it would stay on," he remembers. "My grandparents on my mother's side lived in Bed-Stuy, a hard-core neighborhood. My father's parents were in Sheepshead Bay. I was real close with both." Lenny's faith in love, and in human beings, is the product of a child who inhabited, incredibly, a world where such a faith was justified. "My parents had a lot of friends, hip late-'60s poets, actors, musicians, black and white, a lot of mixed-race couples. My school had all kinds of people, black, white, Egyptian, Japanese kids, diplomats' children. Race was never an issue."

a set of tools to be used in the present.

The rising tension between blacks and Jews in New York City bothers Lenny Kravitz. "You'd think with all the history in common there'd be some understanding," he says. "Blacks and Jews have been through a lot of the same things. The black man sees the Jew as stingy: 'Well, the Jewish man is running things.' The truth is we need each other.

"I went to S.O.B.'s with some friends one night. Two groups were playing, Poor Righteous Teachers, and, I think, X-Clan. The audience was mixed, black and white. About halfway through the show the group starts dogging on white people, really harsh, not letting up. Some of the friends I was with were white. They were uncomfortable, I was uncomfortable, and at a certain point I walked out. I understand where people are coming from. I'm black, my mother's family is black, the black man has a hard time here. But man, racism is racism. You dog on one group or another, and you become a racist as well." It is a simple statement that, as I reflect on it, seems depressingly unique. ▶

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MENT

Lights

THE PERFECT RECESS

SLASH, THE GUITARIST FOR GUNS N' ROSES, appears three lines up from Sebastian Bach in Lenny's address book. "We met at the American Music Awards," Lenny recalls. "I didn't really know any metal guys, and suddenly Slash and Duff are standing over me, you know. I look up and Slash says, 'You're Lenny Kravitz. I fuckin' love your record. Me and my old lady fuck to your music.' I guess that's when we became friends. Actually we went to high school together—Beverly Hills High—but I didn't really know him then. I'd see him around in the halls."

Like Lenny Kravitz, Slash is half black and half white. "A lot of people don't know that about Slash, but if you're black you can tell right away." Asked if they ever talk about living between two worlds, Lenny pauses. "I mean, if you've got black blood in this country, you're black. I want to talk, but I don't fuck with him, you know. . . ." Lenny trails off, then resumes. "I mean, it's not as if it's some kind of mystical union," he says, drawing up his shoulders. "Like, together we make one whole black man and one whole white." Slash plays on the first two tracks of *Mama Said*: "Fields of Joy," and "Always on the Run," the first single and video.

"Fields of Joy," a late-'60s love drone that appears twice on *Mama Said*, sounds more like the material on "Let Love Rule." "I saw it as the bridge between this album and the last one," Lenny explains. "It's a song recorded by the New York Rock Ensemble in the early '70s. I used to sing it when I was in the California Boys Choir. I used to play bass, actually a four-string guitar. One kid played this little synth, and another was the drummer. It was our rock piece.

"Last year the choir director came to catch one of my gigs, and I played it for him, you know—the first time I sang it in, like, ten years, and I started getting into it again. Slash wanted to play the solo with a lot of reverb, distortion. I plugged him in, told him to play it straight. He just tore that shit up, man. It was perfect. He wanted to record it again, like twenty times or whatever, but I unplugged him. I was flipped out, jumping all over the room I was so happy. I was jumping all over Slash. We didn't know each other that well then, I think he was a little freaked out."

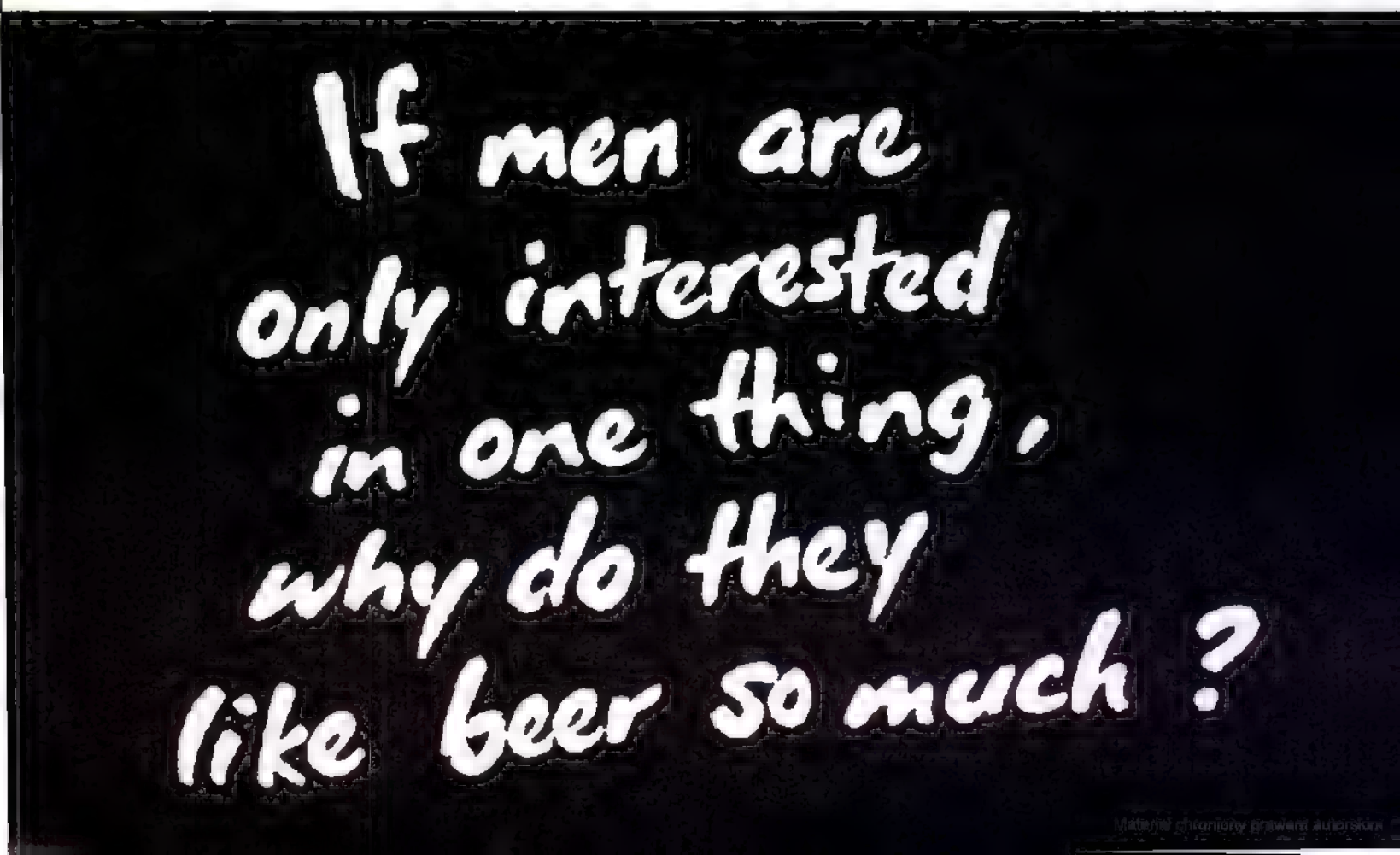
"WE'RE ALL FREAKS OF OUR OWN KIND," Lenny Kravitz is explaining. "We all do stuff but you're forbidden to talk about it—you come home in a suit, your smiling wife. People should be open, voice the things that make you say, 'Wow, I'm strange.' " Lenny begins to warm to his subject. "In America, we pretend that stuff doesn't happen. I mean, it would be good for people to see George Bush bending Barbara over the couch and giving it to her up the ass. They do it," he says, nearly pleading, "and people need to know."

The absolute faith in love on Lenny's first album is seasoned on *Mama Said* with a bedrock knowledge of pain, a change brought on by the breakup of his marriage to actress Lisa Bonet. The words come out in a rush. "I made an album, it was my life in music, everything I felt and believed in. But we were married, we had a kid. I was in the studio, the band was living with us. Everything was wrapped up into one tight ball. The record came out, and suddenly I wasn't sure what I was doing, who I was."

We talk about pride, sick anger, and loss tangled together in the pit of your stomach, the late night vision of your lover in bed with someone else. "When I made the album I was depressed, sleeping two hours a night, days running into each other. You have that feeling—you feel it will never end. I lost my woman, and I lost my best friend. We didn't talk about some things. There were hangers-on; I fucked up. We could have dealt with the problems if I was at home. If I had it to do over, I would make different choices. I want to be around, I want to spend time with my kid.

"I preached love and peace, and got lost up inside it," Lenny says of one song. "Lisa and I were together; she was my best friend. We were in love, that feeling where nothing else in the world matters—you know, the Love Couple of the '90s. I'm preaching love on tour, apart from my lover. I end up losing the thing I'm singing about. It's a song about a cat who's on a trip through love, but he's also a human being."

Lenny Kravitz, a cat on a trip through love, believes in the power of music to remake a world as only a musician could. "For me, it's life. Not 'mu-



sic is my life,' but my life comes out in my music. It's like therapy. If I didn't have music I'd jump off a roof." One observes that Lenny Kravitz is given to talking about music as a gift, as in "Sean's father left him with a tremendous gift."

The intermediary process of crafting life into image is an uncomfortable mystery. "It bugged me out to see my first review in *Rolling Stone*, some cat throwing words around without even the slightest idea of who I was. You just get used to it after a while. I see it as the price of my freedom, I guess. This freedom I have to make music."

"I wish MTV didn't exist. I make music. I wish it was just you and the record."

In recent months, Madonna, a close friend, seems to have had a certain influence. "She's taught me a few things: how to work a talent, push it the way I haven't done, how to do certain things. . . . " His voice trails off, full of hope and regret at having heard the price there is to pay—it's high—but frankly quoted by a master.

LENNY KRAVITZ, NOTED IN *MUSICIAN* FOR his use of instruments like the Mellotron, some of which have not seen the fluorescent lights of a recording studio in 20 years, is pissed off, bobbing his head and gesticulating. "There's an art of recording that's been lost. Tell me you've heard a record out now that sounds, just sounds, better than Al Green, Aretha, Stevie Wonder, the Stones . . . " The list goes on. "Digital tape machines, they're great for a nice piano concerto, you know, but noise is part of rock'n'roll. The digital reverb effects they have now sound like tinfoil.

"I don't do this to be a romantic, a retro-bohemian—" Lenny pauses, searching for words, "—antique collector." He sits back, satisfied. "Someone buys a hand-crafted, three hundred-year-old table instead of some glued-together piece of crap, and no one says they're living in the past. I get the instruments I need to make the songs come out the way I hear them."

Lenny Kravitz's uses of the '60s have been assailed, most recently by rock critic John Leland in *Newsweek*, for a similar naïveté. According to Leland, the Kravitz-led re-recording of John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance" grossly simplified the Lennon message, naming good causes and "awards each a gold star." Lenny takes issue not so much with the substance of this criticism but its tone.

"Sean and I were sitting in my studio in Hoboken," Lenny explains. "Sean was on Christmas break from his school in Geneva, the war is building up, nostalgia war movies from the '40s on television, you know, Time-Life *Air War* tapes. I mentioned to Sean that I wanted to do a remake of 'Give Peace a Chance,' but that I was too scared to ask his mom for permission. Sean calls home and says, 'Mom, Lenny wants to do a remake of "Give Peace a Chance." ' I'm sitting there, Sean's not saying anything, I'm feeling how arrogant this must sound. Sean gets off the phone and says, 'Mom thinks it's a great idea.'

"The next day we meet at nine in my studio to write lyrics, and Sean says, 'Well, I've already been working on some.' With a few changes, those were the lyrics we used. I think Sean did a great job. He's fifteen years old, and he wrote about the things that kids hear and talk about. It wasn't intended to save the world." The '60s, to Lenny Kravitz, are not so much a part of the past but a set of tools to be used in the present.

On his failure to live up to his MTV *Rock the Vote* appearance by actually voting himself, Lenny is at first apologetic. "I was in the studio, working sixteen hours a day to get the album out. I'm registered in Los Angeles, and the deadline for an absentee ballot just passed me by," he ex-

continued on page 83

Cool Decade '70s

CELIA FARBER tells us why the '70s were *dy-no-mite.*

I love it. My decade, your decade, *our* decade, SPIN-lings, the mutant decade—the ugly decade, the incomprehensibly *un*cool decade that everybody wished had never happened in the first place—is *back*. But this time it's very cool. Much cooler than the '60s, because the '60s *tried* so hard to be cool. And meaningful. And radical. If I see one more balding intellectual on TV saying, "You see . . . we thought we could change the world," I will drop dead from boredom, right there. I feel cautiously optimistic that the end of '60s revivalism may be in sight; only to be usurped by—you guessed it—*'70s* revivalism. Whoopie! Get your bell-bottoms out, your platforms, your Carpenters records, your Ouija boards. This is gonna be fun! Now it's *our* turn to stick up for our decade and carry on about how great it was. We '70s kids are all twentysomething now, and old enough to have media jobs like mine here, where you get to force your nostalgia upon the rest of the world. God, I can't wait.

At the time, growing up in New York City, I didn't realize we were actually having a decade. I thought I was wearing tie-dyed bell-bottoms and T-shirts to school because they were clothes. I mean, I thought they were normal clothes. Besides, I had made them myself in school.

Black kids and white kids went to school together and the black kids tried to teach us white kids how to dance to stuff like the Ohio Players and Disco Tex and the Funkoboogielettes (or whatever they were called). We collected singles, and they had a big hole in the middle so you needed those red plastic dingbats to play them.

I remember little things like that. Broken linoleum kitchen floors. Dippity-Do from Woolworth's that my mother globbed all over my head to create a helmet-like effect (my punishment for trying to cut shaggy bangs). Cleaning the fish tank. My sister painting her room Day-Glo green and pink and saving up to buy a big tacky rainbow that covered a whole wall. The summers were hot and taste went from bad to worse. Nail decals. Feathers. Eye shadow that was pure glitter—the '70s were not a decade for the faint-hearted.

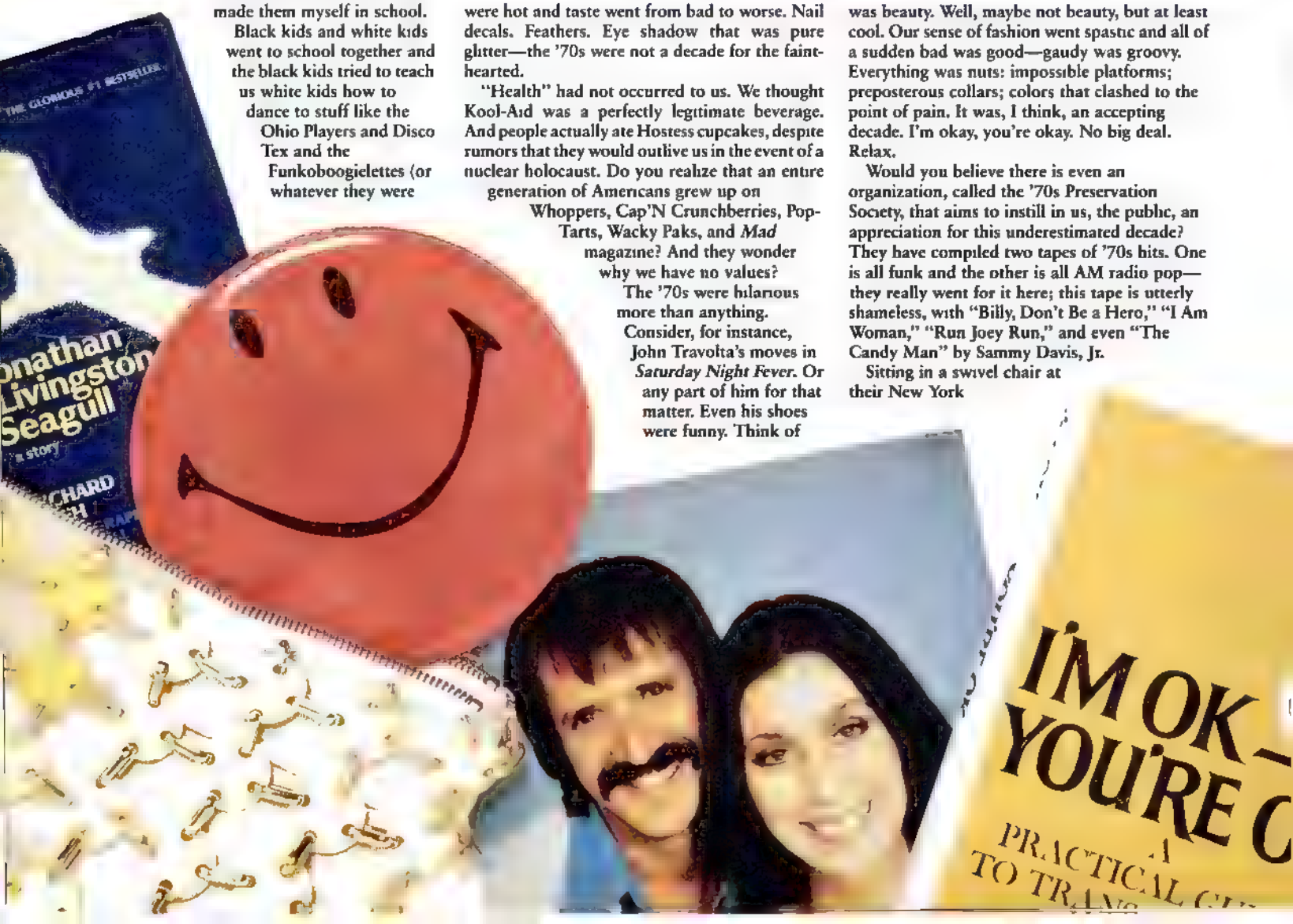
"Health" had not occurred to us. We thought Kool-Aid was a perfectly legitimate beverage. And people actually ate Hostess cupcakes, despite rumors that they would outlive us in the event of a nuclear holocaust. Do you realize that an entire generation of Americans grew up on Whoppers, Cap'N Crunchberries, Pop-Tarts, Wacky Paks, and *Mad* magazine? And they wonder why we have no values?

The '70s were hilarious more than anything. Consider, for instance, John Travolta's moves in *Saturday Night Fever*. Or any part of him for that matter. Even his shoes were funny. Think of the Bee Gees' voices and tell me you're not laughing. Think of the Village People! Think of just about anything, and you'll feel better right away.

All the clothes in the '70s were hilarious. Even the fabric. Polyester! And the hair—Afros! (White Afros were the funniest.) Bell-bottoms, of course, the bigger the better. I have a pair of bell-bottoms and I wear them all the time, to work even, and people think I'm kidding but in a way I'm not. I actually *like* the way they look. Which brings me to another critical point about the '70s: Ugliness was beauty. Well, maybe not beauty, but at least cool. Our sense of fashion went spastic and all of a sudden bad was good—gaudy was groovy. Everything was nuts: impossible platforms; preposterous collars; colors that clashed to the point of pain. It was, I think, an accepting decade. I'm okay, you're okay. No big deal. Relax.

Would you believe there is even an organization, called the '70s Preservation Society, that aims to instill in us, the public, an appreciation for this underestimated decade? They have compiled two tapes of '70s hits. One is all funk and the other is all AM radio pop—they really went for it here; this tape is utterly shameless, with "Billy, Don't Be a Hero," "I Am Woman," "Run Joey Run," and even "The Candy Man" by Sammy Davis, Jr.

Sitting in a swivel chair at their New York



headquarters, I am surrounded by classic '70s artifacts: A lava lamp (they sell them), a Nixon candle, a huge smiley face button in Day-Glo orange, unopened Reese's peanut butter cups, and pictures of '70s celebrities—from Cher to Bo Donaldson to Patty Hearst.

The founders of the '70s Preservation Society, Craig Balsam and Cliff Chenfeld, both in their late 20s, met in law school, embarked on a typical '80s high-stress, no-fun yuppie life-style, and then jumped ship when it got too boring.

Craig bounces a very '70s basketball, as he explains: "We had this '80s angst, and we just decided we couldn't go on any longer. Out of this angst came a revelation that what we really loved was the days of our youth, the great 1970s. We started staying up all night watching *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *All in the Family* reruns. Take any pop culture area you want and compare it to the '80s and I think the '70s will look better. I'm not kidding."

The three of us brainstorm:

"All the movies."

"Right, the disaster movies: *Jaws, The Poseidon Adventure, Earthquake, Airport.*"

"All of Woody Allen's best stuff . . . "

"*The Godfather, Cuckoo's Nest, Rocky.*"

"*Tommy*!" I offer, but even these guys didn't like that movie. (I'm still the only person I've ever heard of who liked it. Saw it 13 times. Vintage '70s. Elton John in those giant sparkly boots singing "Pinball Wizard." Ann-Margret swimming around in a sea of baked beans and bubbles. I don't get it. What's not to like?)

"All the blaxploitation movies were in the '70s: *Superfly, Shaft* . . ."

"*Shaft in Africa.*"

"Not to mention all the television. *Welcome Back, Kotter; Saturday Night Live* was great then."

Sign me up, I tell them. I want to be a member. How much for a lava lamp?

We rattle off more '70s stuff. Elvis sideburns, Evel Knievel, shag haircuts, shag carpeting, earth shoes, Leo Brezhnev, Frye boots, Olga Korbut, Slinkys, toe socks, John Denver, Bruce Lee, the Mafia, fondue, Tony Orlando, roll-on lip gloss, Jimmy Carter, Muhammad Ali, *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, the Partridge Family (*David Cassidy!!*), Watergate, the Bicentennial, Kiss, Aerosmith and all that, Robert De Niro in *Taxi Driver*, Pro-Keds, Monopoly, Jodie Foster, Mexican jumping beans, pimps in big white hats—oh God, the list is absolutely endless. Make your own! (Send it to us.)

Cliff sums up: "We love the '70s because they were a decade in which people were a lot happier and a lot funnier than they are today. It was a silly, fun time. People weren't so serious about having the perfect body or making tons of money. Everybody was, like, sitting in their beanbag chair, with their headphones on, listening to their Pink Floyd eight-track. No matter what shape."

Yes, people were still allowed to be fat or skinny or funny-looking back then. Our celebrities were misfits: J.J. from *Good Times* and Fat Albert and *Sanford and Son*. Damn Jane Fonda to the bottom of hell! In the '70s, loads of people had funky, imperfect bodies, and they were perfectly happy that way. In fact, women were *supposed* to have big butts in the '70s. In 1977, when I was 11, I moved to Sweden with my mother and sister, and I remember asking a girl in school why all the boys liked the blond girl in Abba the best. "It's because of her butt," she told me. "What?" I exclaimed. "But her butt is too big." She shook her head. "A butt can never be too big. Men like them big," she said sadly, as we were both built like toothpicks. "I don't believe you," I said defiantly. Boy, those were the days.

The '80s were rough. I was terrified. I didn't have the body for that decade, or the sensibility. You weren't allowed to be sappy in the '80s, that was the worst thing. In the '70s we had Barry Manilow, Paul Anka, Simon and Garfunkel, you name it. Everything was innocent and sappy and soft. Remember the song about the girl who planted that tree and then she died? Boy, did that song tear me up. Can you imagine trying to write a song like that today? You'd be eaten alive. These days it's all about how much we all hate each other. And disco's back as house music, but this time around, everybody has a gun.

I miss Jimmy Carter. He was the last decent, honest, innocent President, and I had a big crush on him. He had such a nice smile. He was a peanut farmer! I even dressed up as Carter for Halloween once. I think it's every woman's right to have a crush on the President. But these days, can you imagine?

And last but not least, the music. Take your pick: funk, disco, reggae, punk, classic rock, art rock, cheesy, sappy ballads, and pop songs. Notice how all these new bands are playing funk? Notice how all the biggest hits—Vanilla Ice, Hammer, and all that crap—are all direct rip-offs of '70s classics?

Nail decals. Feathers. Eye shadow that was pure glitter—the '70s were not a decade for the faint-hearted.

I highly recommend that you order the two tapes from the '70s Preservation Society. And don't be embarrassed—only uncool people feel shame. Crank it. Get your lava lamp going. Make yourself a nice peanut butter and Marshmallow Fluff sandwich on Wonder bread. Apologize to no one. And smile! ☮

Toll-free hotline to join the '70s Preservation Society: (800) 666-1972.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAIME [redacted]OO

ACCORDING TO AN INFORMAL SPIN SURVEY conducted by this author among his aimless college-graduate ilk, John Cusack is the most liked *of* all twentysomething celebrities. You'd think this honor would go to a rock star—after all, pop music is the only mass-marketed cultural product made by and for the young. Something is changing.

This is the *Star Wars*—not the Sex Pistols—generation. My friends buy new records, but they get more excited about new movies. More and more, the best minds of our generation are passing over guitars for camcorders and film school. The ceaseless technological progress that originally made recorded entertainment possible has produced the video age, the mongrel child of television and movies.

We live during the golden renaissance of the '60s teen flick—no more mature, but much less contrived. The genre has mostly turned out crappy movies motivated by the R-rated obsession with exposed breasts. This is best

NATHANIEL WICE talks to

exemplified in *Zapped!*, the story of a high-school science genius played by Scott Baio who uses telepathic powers to undo girl's bras. But in the hands of genuine talent, teen movies have the power to speak to people more directly and more compellingly than any other form of communication. Call it reel life. The most appealing of these characters—from a surprisingly long list that includes an excellent Nicolas Cage in *Valley Girl*, Keanu Reaves and Crispin Glover in *River's Edge*, the brat packers in John Hughes flicks, Johnny Depp (who definitely does not deserve Winona Ryder), and the irritating Michael J. Fox in anything—is Cusack's Lloyd Dobler in *Say Anything*.

It was Lloyd, you'll remember, wearing his Clash T-shirt, who serenaded Diane Court, the beautiful but aloof class brain played by Ione Skye, with the cheesy Peter Gabriel song "In Your Eyes" blasting out of a boom box held overhead. It was Lloyd who explained his career plans to his girlfriend's father—that he didn't want to buy, sell, or produce anything. "My father's in the military. But I can't work for that corporation." Lloyd explains to the disappointed father, "I dunno, sir. I can't figure it all out. Right now, I'm just going to hang out with your daughter." According to the aforementioned survey, there is no greater cinematic moment.

Materiał chroniony prawem autorskim

Cool Actor

the actor who has won over the cynics of his generation by being anything but.

THE FIRST FIRST THING YOU REALIZE WHEN YOU TALK to John Cusack is that he's much cooler than Lloyd. Lloyd is endearing, but John is attractive. Lloyd, for all of his charms, is not someone you'd really want to be friends with. In the movie he doesn't even get along with the guys, and he functions as some sort of weird object of maternal affections for his chorus of female friends. John is harder and sturdier. A brawny six-feet-two, he's better suited to Minor Threat's "In My Eyes" than Lloyd's romantic "In Your Eyes." He's opinionated about geopolitics when he talks about the evolution of Lloyd's dinner-table speech: "We first started out with these sprawling diatribes about the world being part of an imperialist country and being rampant consumers at the expense of the third world—all these funny, sick things—that we reduced to one line, with that 'I can't work for that corporation.' It's better to entertain than preach." It's difficult to imagine him suffering unrequited love. I imagine Lloyd wannabes out there, working on their stutters and imagining romantic tensions with pretty acquaintances. Always daydreaming, alluding to some pop texts (e.g., *Annie Hall*, Molly Ringwald, or the Buzzcocks song "Ever Fallen in Love?"), or getting angry about the problem of date rape.

But John is no Lloyd wannabe; he bristles with a soft-spoken dismissal when people confuse him with the part he played. "I did that three years ago," he says, "It's part of the work I've done. But people still sometimes identify me with the character. Cameron [Crowe, director of *Say Anything*] and I came up with the vibe that it's revolutionary to be a Holden Caulfield kind of optimist. That this guy was a nonconformist and radical without being a drunken, pessimistic person was really cool."

The trademark sincerity with which John played Lloyd shows up in all of his roles—the incorruptible Chicago White Soxer, George "Buck" Weaver, who played to win during the 1919 World Series even though he knew his teammates were throwing the games (*Eight Men Out*), the idealistic physicist who anguishes over the morality of the Manhattan Project (*Fat Man and Little Boy*), and a horny romantic (*The Sure Thing*). The strength and weakness of Cusack's characters is always that they have a heightened sense of their limits. Even as con artist Roy Dillon in Stephen Frears's film noir–ish adaptation of the Jim Thompson novel *The Grifters*, Cusack plays a character who refuses to overrate himself. In his movies, the adult world threatens youthful pride.

John says of *The Grifters*, as he will say about any of his roles, that he "picked the movie because it is basically a character movie. The characters don't just exist to serve plot and genre." For me, *The Grifters* is a con movie without a good con. Cusack's character, Roy Dillon, is a modest scam artist, a grifter of twenty-dollar bills, wary of the big time. Cusack is proud of the movie's psychological complexity, even if he admits that it is wrongly being marketed as a thriller.

In his next movie, *True Colors*, he plays an ambitious Washington politico who, like Roy Dillon, is more a corrupt victim than victimizer. It is a lavish Hollywood production that will probably be Cusack's biggest hit, and may establish Cusack as a leading man, or compromise his credibility, or both. When not working on movies or reading scripts, he's busy with his politically informed Chicago theater company, New Crime Productions. And, most exciting, Cusack was recently cast in an upcoming Woody Allen movie, with Madonna, John Malkovich, and Jodie Foster.

CUSACK HANDLES HIS FAME THE WAY YOU'D WANT A friend to behave if he or she became a celebrity—self-assured enough not to be condescending. He's slightly embarrassed by the fact that people actually listen to what he has to say, but equally willing to speak his mind. After witnessing a police riot at a Public Enemy/Sonic Youth concert held December 29, 1990, at the Aragon Ballroom in his hometown Chicago, Cusack used his name to draw attention to what seemed to most observers as a clear case of police brutality. The Aragon security and Chicago cops, presumably expecting a rowdy rap audience (instead of the mostly white audience that turned out), responded violently to a small number of antiwar demonstrators who were chanting and pamphleting after the concert. The fracas escalated when the police began arresting anyone who wouldn't leave the area.

Cusack describes the thinking that led up to an editorial published in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. "I was worried about being used as a sound bite. That's basically what the [Chicago] *Tribune* did. I went over to the *Tribune* and the [Chicago] *Sun-Times* with a story. What I saw was definitely police brutality—definitely uncalled for, police-provoked violence—and I didn't want it to be labeled on the national scene as another incident of rap-related violence. We were at a club later, and I was pretty disgusted. I told my buddy I was thinking about writing an editorial. He said, 'You should, they'll print your celebrity ass.' He called me on it. He said, 'You have the power, you should do it.' It's one of the first times I felt obligated. We got a couple of beers and went back to his place, and I typed it out. I wanted to try to shape the news coverage, so I did it that night. Then the *Tribune* made it into an issue of me disputing the police, instead of what happened. The cops came to bust heads. I have no idea what their agenda was. But I think it has something to do with the war, with how bloodthirsty we're all acting."

Cusack is borderline neurotic about not appearing preachy or moralistic. He punctuates conscientious political harangues against big business, the Bush administration, and nationalism with caveats such as "Don't get the idea that I think I'm some big expert." The author blurb at the bottom of his *Sun Times* editorial describes a simple citizen: "John Cusack, who went to school in Evanston [a Chicago suburb], is an actor."

When John Cusack finds himself, we find ourselves. Maybe the fame feeds his humility.

ALBERT SANCHEZ

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it's only rock 'n' roll

As the band of the moment, the Black Crowes have been accused of ripping off the Stones and the Faces. But as BILL HOLDSHIP reports, the band is out to prove that it's true to the blues and too cool to handle.

Chris Robinson, the Black Crowes' very skinny lead singer, is standing in the band's tour bus outside the Market Square Arena in Indianapolis. The Crowes have just finished another set as the support act on ZZ Top's *Recycler* tour. When the band completes this tour in May, it'll have been on the road for almost 16 months, and they're beginning to look a little road weary. Drummer Steve Gorman has been complaining all day that he's coming down with something; he even threatened to pass out during the after-show meet-and-greet session with Indianapolis's radio dudes and dudettes. Chris Robinson is still hurting from the last three nights in Chicago, which included a visit from his girlfriend and late-night jam sessions with Albert Collins and the Kinsey Report at Chicago's legendary blues clubs. It's the middle of February, it's been drizzling nonstop all day, and it's dreary in a way that only someone who's experienced the Midwest in the middle of February understands *dreary*.

Just Cool

CHRISTOPHER GALLO

Three teenage girls, major Black Crowes fans, have waited by the bus for a little meet-and-greet session of their own. Guitarist Rich Robinson, Chris's younger brother, and the first to exit the arena, has invited them on the bus to wait until the other Crowes return. But get your mind out of the gutter, folks. There's none of the groupie servicing I witnessed on a tour bus seven years ago while on the road with a Hollywood-based heavy metal band. (So what was I supposed to do? Stand up and yell, "Stop! You long-haired morons are using these young girls"?) No, Rich has invited the girls on the bus to *talk*; in fact, he'll spend the next two hours on the phone, doing interviews with the Australian press. The Crowes treat their fans courteously and with respect. Earlier in the afternoon, they'd given a free ticket and after-show pass to one of the teenage guys who'd waited around their ritzy hotel for an autograph.

And, as I mentioned, these girls are *major* Black Crowes fans. They know a lot about the group, having probably absorbed every article they can find on the guys. They've presented Rich with an unwrapped deck of Aleister Crowley Tarot cards. He seems appreciative, but informs us that bassist Johnny Colt is the member of the band who really knows Tarot etiquette, and will really appreciate the cards. Probably more than any other member of the Crowes, Johnny's image is in line with the Keith Richards, "darker" side of rock. He has the dark features, a pierced nose, and on his finger a rat-head ring, which is reportedly part of a real rodent skull dipped in silver. "Someone sent me just the Death card in the mail once," says Johnny, in reference to the Tarot cards. "I got rid of it fast."

Speaking of rings, Chris Robinson wears the same type of skull ring on his finger that Keith Richards wears. But style-wise, he's a little closer to the early glory days of Rod Stewart—tonight's show featured Chris wearing a gorgeous bright-green velvet suit with a gold lamé scarf —and that's true of his vocal style and onstage demeanor as well. During the show, he proves himself to be a classic strutter and stutterer—a little bit of Jagger but a lot of Rod the Mod. Still, it's Keith that this band keeps returning to, be it Rich's open-G guitar style onstage and on disc or Chris quoting the Rolling Stones bandleader to support a putdown of Swedish model look-alikes and recent chart-toppers Nelson.

THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO SIDES TO EVERY STORY, and the Black Crowes' saga is no different. Some people seem to believe the Crowes are bringing back the blues-based, raw-edged, loud rock'n'roll that was originally popularized by bands like the Stones and, later, the Faces. Others complain that the Crowes are simply a poor man's substitute for those who missed *Exile on Main Street* or *A Nod's As Good As a Wink to a Blind Horse* the first time around. The Crowes have especially been reviled in their alternative-minded Atlanta hometown for evolving from a "punk band" called Mr. Crowe's Garden that could barely play its instruments into what the Black Crowes have become today.

But then very few people are heroes in their own hometown, and the Black Crowes are rapid-

ly becoming rock heroes everywhere else. The 16 months on the road, working as the support gig for Aerosmith, Robert Plant, and ZZ Top, have put the band's career on the fast track. They've seen gradual upgrades—nicer hotels, a bigger bus, a bigger crew, bigger trucks. And by the time they hit Indianapolis, some of the arena security dudes backstage were speculating that the Crowes probably sold a lot of tickets for tonight's first of two sold-out shows on their own appeal.

At present, the Black Crowes are the biggest musical success story Rick Rubin's Def American label has produced. *Shake Your Money Maker* has already gone platinum. "Jealous Again," "Twice As Hard," "Hard to Handle," and "She Talks to Angels" have all become radio and MTV staples. The band has had a column devoted to it in *Newsweek* magazine, received a Grammy nomination for Best New Artist, and the morning after this first Indianapolis show the band will find itself featured in *USA Today*. Just a week ago, the Crowes were named Best New American Band in both *Rolling Stone*'s readers and critics polls. In other words, the Black Crowes are hot.

The critic's poll may be the biggest honor of the bunch. Metal magazines tapped into the Black Crowes very early on, but in the past 16 months the group has gained something most metal hits never gain—respect from both the critical and alternative communities. "See, I'm under the suspicion that we're just the world's biggest underground band," says Chris Robinson.

"I don't know that we did anything that different except play good songs and have a good front man," adds younger brother Rich. "We just write songs and play them down to the bone, like Guns N' Roses. Theirs may be a different kind music, but they just cut through the bullshit and fucking play. Just like Jane's Addiction does, like Soul Asylum does, like Lenny Kravitz does."

No matter what your take might be on this group, you have to admit it's refreshing to hear a classic-lineup rock'n'roll band take Otis Redding's "Hard to Handle" to the top of the charts in this synthesized, lip-synching era. I live in Los Angeles, and in L.A. there are tons of kids the same age as the Robinson brothers (Chris just turned 24; Rich is 21) whose rock'n'roll roots begin and end with Mötley Crüe. If you're lucky, they may go back as far as Van Halen, or possibly Aerosmith. But in the case of the Robinsons—well, it's been said that you can tell a lot about a person by their record collection, and these are just a few of the artists featured in the Crowes' on-the-road CD collection (Chris, a confessed vinyl junkie, is said to have thousands of discs at home): Joe Cocker; Sly and the Family Stone; Hendrix; the Stooges; lots of Bob Dylan; lots of Neil Young; lots of the Stones; Marvin Gaye; the Wilburys; James Brown; Mississippi Fred McDowell; Deee-Lite; Muddy Waters; the Hypnotics; lots of Beatles; Lightnin' Hopkins; Terry & McGhee; Ravi Shankar; Flying Burrito Brothers; Robert Johnson (a major obsession for both brothers); Booker T. and the MGs; John Lee Hooker; Cheap Trick; lots of Aerosmith; the Cure; lots of Replacements; lots of Rod Stewart; and a Japanese import of *A Nod's As Good . . .* that they had to pay $45 to obtain. Not too shabby.

"Since I was a little kid, I knew who Otis Redding was," says Chris, who claims that he learned all the parts to Sly and the Family Stone's "Dance to the Music," almost before he could walk. "I don't know if that's 'cause I'm from the South, or just that music means so much to me. Another friend said to me, 'You know, you brought Otis Redding to the masses in a way that no one has before.' I'm like, *'What?'* And then I started thinking about it, and it was like, 'Whoa! We did have the biggest version of "Hard to Handle." ' Part of me feels good about that, and part of me thinks it's a shame that people don't know who Otis Redding is.

"I remember a time when you didn't have the alternative charts, you didn't have college music, you had rock radio where you heard everything from Ravi Shankar to the Stooges to the Rolling Stones. And kids who bought MC5 records bought Humble Pie records, bought Stones records, bought Led Zeppelin records. I still come across people who think Led Zeppelin is 'kid's music': 'Oh, I listened to that when I was a kid.' Well, maybe you should put down the 10,000 Maniacs, which sounds like something my parents would listen to because it's so fucking nice and sweet, and put on a Led Zeppelin record, 'cause that's rock'n'roll music. They embodied so many different kinds of music, like the Stones did, from blues to country music to more ethnic music. And the way they interpreted it came out differently than the way the Stones interpreted it."

In many regards, it could be argued that the Crowes are part of a long continuum that traces the blues as filtered through the Rolling Stones, then the Faces, then Aerosmith. The band leans much more toward standard blues references and hard R&B than it does toward the Chuck Berry riffs and grooves that made the Stones such kick-ass rock'n'roll icons. The Black Crowes are at least part of that long continuum that Bo Diddley encapsulated when he said, "Then all the white boys started playing it, and it became rock'n'roll."

ONSTAGE, THE BLACK CROWES CAN TELL THEIR first Indianapolis appearance is going over well. I'm sitting in the 12th row, and the person sitting next to me is the kid who'd been presented with the free ticket and pass from the band earlier in the day. He's going wild; on his feet for the entire set, he's whopping, stomping, and headbangin'. He prefers stuff like the Crüe and Guns N' Roses, although he listens to rap because his girlfriend likes it. And he loves the Crowes. "If it wasn't for music," he says, "I wouldn't be here, man. For me, music is better than drugs."

Most great popular bands have had great logos, from the Stones' tongue to the Doors' 3-D lettering to the Monkees' guitar . . . and the Black Crowes have a great logo. Of course, the two drunken birds in Alan Forbes's design do make Rich and Chris, in Rich's own words "kind of look like Woody and Keith." Or it might make you think of the Glimmer Twins themselves.

RAT SKULL RING COURTESY OF C'EST MAGNIFIQUE 120 MACDOUGAL ST NEW YORK CITY

("Our bassist calls us the Rotten Twins," says Rich.) But for all the Stones-like characteristics, the backstage scene at the Market Square Arena looks less like *Cocksucker Blues* than it does a reflection of '80s temperance. Chris even drinks Evian water onstage during the performance.

Earlier in the day, I was sitting in the dressing room as Humble Pie's *Rock On* blasted from the stereo at near-Spinal Tap levels. The five bandmembers went into the next room to work on a new song called "Thorn in My Pride." (In fact, they introduced two new songs onstage that night.) Shortly thereafter, their road manager asked me to vacate the premises because the Crowes wanted their "privacy." He explained that their girlfriends were in town and such, although the only girlfriend I met was second guitarist Jeff Cease's fiancée, Mary, who was very conversational at first, but who I have a sneaking hunch was later told not to tell me things about the band.

In fact, a member of the band's crew told me that day, "Anything you hear me say, Bill, is off the record," even though he didn't say anything that could be interpreted as offensive the entire night. Another crew member explains: "They had a birthday party, and a stripper appeared. It got reported in one of the magazines, and some of these guys are married or have serious girlfriends." All this talk of privacy isn't to say the Black Crowes aren't nice, friendly, and still young enough to be totally unaffected by their sudden success. It's just that I don't think the band—and Chris in particular—is completely comfortable with the press. After all, as I said: *Cocksucker Blues* this ain't.

"We didn't let you in our other room," Chris cackles the next day, "because we're still young enough to touch the hot light bulb when we're told not to. The Black Crowes do enjoy their vices, but no one misses a gig. That's part of being a Southerner. I was in L.A., and Timothy Leary toasted us to the decadent South. But you have to have it together. I don't think anyone wants to wake up a junkie in seven years with their teeth falling out. I think dental work keeps us from being big drug abusers."

Rich makes apologies for the Evian water onstage the night before. "We weren't allowed to have alcohol onstage. It's some weird law where you can get arrested. And we were preoccupied, working on a song. Normally, it's a lot different." I had already been told that Rich neither drinks nor does drugs.

THE BLACK CROWES WERE BASICALLY BORN when Steve, their drummer, joined up with the Robinson brothers. At the time, he was in the Atlanta alternative band, Mary My Hope, and living in the same house as Chris. The band became popular on the college scene, eventually drawing 15,000 to their gigs.

"I feel bad for them because they get a lot of shit now in Atlanta," says George Drakoulias, the A&R man who spent two years trying to sign them to A&M ("We weren't metal enough," claims Rich) before hooking the band up with Def American. "There was no sell-out here. It wasn't a contrived thing. This is the kind of music these guys wanted to make. But Atlanta is a small town with lots of gossip. Nobody wants to see anyone get real successful."

"A lot of people are saying, 'Oh, you guys are doing this to sell records.' But it's like, 'Where the hell were you the past three years when we were getting better at our instruments, writing different songs, listening to different music, and expanding?' " says Rich. "R.E.M. was eighty miles north of us, and it created this snotty music scene. When we started just playing our music, that's when people stopped coming to see us, because they were hanging out and sipping cappucino."

It should be noted that Rich and Chris are the proverbial yin and yang. Younger Rich is quiet, introspective, obviously very intelligent. Singer Chris, meanwhile, is a nonstop talker, whose thought patterns seem to weave all over the place and back again. Says Rich, "I'm the protective younger brother 'cause Chris is so flaky. Which is cool. He's a front man. He needs to be. He doesn't need to worry about shit. I'll do the worrying." As for his big brother's feelings on the subject: "I always wanted to be a rock star," admits Chris. "Another novel concept! A rock star.

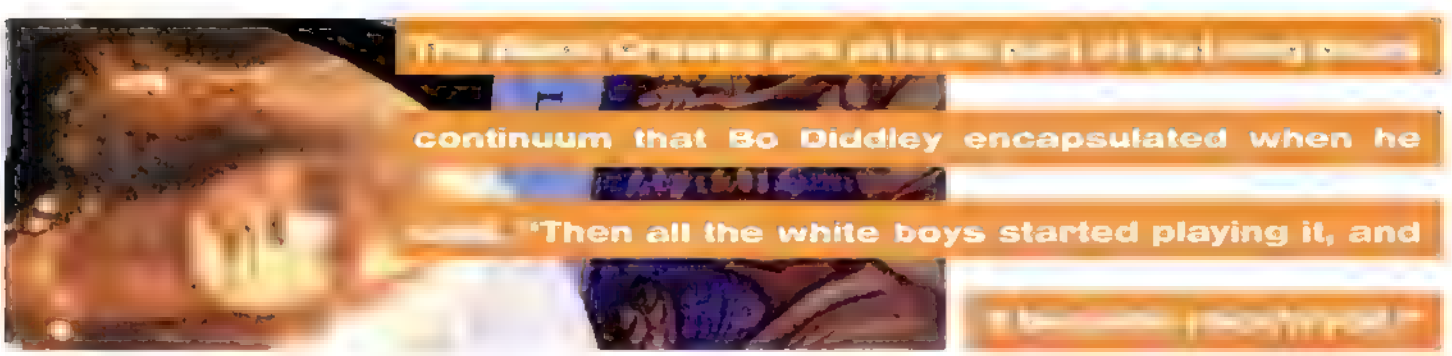
"Let's be honest, it is the age of MTV," he continues. "I've never put great stock in MTV, but then again . . . I've never dressed like everyone else. Like when I was a kid and Steve Tyler said, 'Wearin' all the things that nobody wears,' I went, 'Yeah! Alright!' We like clothes. Anything that Keith Richards wore was gospel. I mean, I'm not going to lie. I think what it is—you have some people who are great players, but maybe they can't write tunes and don't have any style. Then you have people who can write tunes, but they can't get onstage and get their point across. And then you have people who look good, but can't do any of the other things. I'd like to think that we have quite a bit of all three going for us: five young guys playing rock'n'roll that's interesting and thought provoking.

"The thing that pisses me off is that the music scene in Atlanta is going to sit around and go, 'Oh, they sold out.' Yeah, I sold out! I sell out here, I sell out there. I sold a million records. Fuck, yes, I sell things. But don't say that I've done anything to make me wake up feeling dirty and used. I've never understood the alternative mentality that you shouldn't play to as many people as you can. We get hassled because we're musicians now, and we weren't for a long time. It took a year of playing every night."

AFTER THE FIRST SHOW, BACK ON THE BUS. THE three girls have left, and we're headed toward the hotel. "Hey, Bill, what you're about to see is totally off the record," says one of the crew; he then kneels down, as another crew member throws a football-shaped wiffle ball, aiming for his open mouth. The Crowes are being very cordial to the invading writer, especially Rich, who has really opened up in the last several moments. He asks me if I'd like to take the Tarot cards, then thinks better of it. "Actually, Johnny knows the proper way to dispose of them. You gotta follow etiquette."

So these guys are really into this voodoo stuff?

"It's just an interest of some people in the band," says Rich. "It's the same way that someone would be interested in Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles books, or a guitar, or the Civil War.



But then someone blew it out of proportion, and made it sound like we kill chickens and goats. And then *Hard Copy* or one of those shows did a story on us being satanic . . . . "

"It all had to do with a journalist coming up with an angle," says Chris, amused but sarcastic at the same time.

And as Johnny complains that he had to pour his Jack Daniels into a Coke can in order to take it onstage tonight, he dips into a large jar to share a simply sinful substance with me. The jar is full of chocolate-chip cookies which a girlfriend has baked for him, and the sweet things taste damn near divine. ⊛

Miller Genuine Draft

BAND NETWORK PROFILE

BIG DADDY KANE

Miller Genuine Draft is pleased to announce its presentation of rap superstar Big Daddy Kane live in concert across America. The 22 year old Brooklyn native, who began rapping at the tender age of 13, drew his first inspiration from the very earliest days of the genre—the late 70's era of legends such as Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five. Kane began his ascent to stardom seven years ago, hooking up with rapper Biz Markie and performing small scale, but power packed, shows all across the New York area. Markie introduced Kane to all the right people: rapper Roxanne Shante, who took Kane on tour as her DJ, and legendary Marly Marl, who was impressed enough to produce Kane's 1988 debut *Long Live The Kane*.

Long Live The Kane produced the mega hit "Ain't No Half Steppin'" which launched Kane on a successful major tour. Last year's followup *It's A Big Daddy Thing* rocketed the star to even greater heights, with the hit singles "Smooth Operator" and "I Get The Job Done." The resulting concert tour put Kane on stage across the country with the likes of Public Enemy and LL Cool J.

Kane's most recent album *Taste Of Chocolate*, which includes the hot single "Cause I Can Do It Right," is fast proving that Kane hasn't lost his touch, and most of all, hasn't reached his limit. His most recent honor was sharing a Grammy Award with Ice-T, Melle Mel, Kool Moe Dee, Quincy D. III and Quincy Jones for Best Rap Performance By A Duo Or Group on Jones' *Back On The Block* album.

Big Daddy Kane raps with utmost authority, a razor edged hip-hop delivery that cuts through the trivial and gets right to the heart of the matter. He's effortlessly smooth and seductive, yet cruel and destructive, all at the same time. His lyrical boasting shows a wit, insight, and streetwise intelligence that is unique not only in rap, but within the entire spectrum of pop music. As both a writer and a rapper Kane is furious. When he says that he gets the job done, and that he can do it right, he not only means it—he proves it.

Believe the hype. Keep an eye on your local listings and make sure not to miss this extraordinary rap event, and long live the Kane indeed.

COOL TECHNOLOGY: TOYS FOR THE MIND

Ten years ago, when the movie *Tron* was released, interactive video games were but a spark in the synapses of hippie computer geeks. Today, witness the meeting of two subcults: the video-game generation meets new age religion, and in the process spawns a new technology. When Judith Hooper and Dick Teresi set out to map the uncharted territory of mind-expanding technology, they coined the term "consciousness tech" and put together a catalogue called **1 *Would the Buddha Wear a Walkman?*** (Simon & Schuster, $16.95). Whether the subject is lucid dreaming classes, creativity-enhancement software, or out-of-body travel agencies, they include enough information to allow people to go out and experience the technology firsthand.

2 The Synchro Energizer, et al

The ultimate in enlightenment-to-go, the Synchro Energizer and its ilk are rapidly becoming the universally recognized emblems of consciousness tech. These are machines that attempt to actively tune your brainwaves to desired frequencies, thus skipping the months and even years it takes serious meditators to learn the same stunt. They use a variety of techniques, including flashing lights, sputtering sounds, and electromagnetic fields. Having taken just one $20, 45-minute sample at a local brain salon, we'll only vouch for an impressive psychedeloid light show projected on the insides of the eyelids and a briefly lingering state of pleasant stupidity.

3 Smart Drugs

Cyberhippies claim that brain fitness will be to the '90s what body fitness was to the '80s. Amateur psychopharmacists have compiled an impressive array of drugs alleged to improve memory and strengthen concentration. They range from the low-impact supplement choline to the quick-blast nasal spray Vasopressin, and the well-tested Belgian import Piracetam. The substances are variously obtainable from health-food stores, physicians, and overseas markets.

4 Virtual Reality

As Silicon Valley hackers perfect the technology of computer-generated realities (the latest versions being televisual goggles and motion-sensitive gloves), the Media Empire casts a hungry eye on this yet-uncolonized realm. But some hackers have more spiritual ambitions. Jaron Lanier, philosopher-king of the infant VR industry, dreams of a day when the gadget will provide "an experience of comfort with multiple realities." He has cooked up altered states such as Ritual World, a serene space filled with torches, surreal giant fern fronds, and shamanic drumbeats emerging from a small, spiky planet hovering overhead. He's also toyed with a world that lets you relive the birth experience. Lanier's company, VPL Research Inc., sells its virtual reality machines for $100,000 a pop, but competitors are bringing prices down in a steep curve that leads straight to your living room.

5 Chaos: The Software

Concerned with whole systems rather than the particles that make them up, the equations that chaos theory is based on produce some of the gnarliest, most beautiful images this side of Timothy Leary's brainpan. They're called fractals, and any home computer can generate them using cheap, easy-to-run, and wildly animated programs. At $59.95, Autodesk Inc.'s Chaos may be the Cadillac of chaos software, but Fractint, a free program available on bulletin boards everywhere, satisfies too.

The Electronic Temple

Throughout history, spirituality has been a site-specific affair. Be it church, temple, or sanctified tree, if you really want to get down to some serious communing, you've got to have a place to do it. So what's to become of the sacred in a time when instantaneous communication makes a joke of the very notion of geography? It turns node-specific, that's what. Nodes are the electronic network's version of places—any spot where two or more lines of communication intersect. A perfect example is a computer bulletin board, and it's no accident that bulletin boards are showing signs of becoming the new temples of the information age. One nationwide modem community, Awakening Technology (503-635-2615, $20 per month membership) already offers occasional on-line rituals as a sideline to its workshops in new age living. On the less saccharine side, pagans, Crowleyites, and do-it-yourself shamans can now gather at bulletin boards with high-arcanum names like BaphoNet, HaditNet, and ThelemaNet. **JULIAN DIBBELL**

GOGGLES BY JAIME BIONDO

Materiał chroniony prawem autorskim

Cool Hip Hop

Declaring that *De La Soul Is Dead*, the beat-box beatniks turn ornery. Have they lost the plot? Or are they writing it? STEVEN DALY explains.

"Don't call it a comeback!"
—L.L. Cool J, "Mama Said Knock You Out"

LISTEN, IN HIP HOP, *EVERY* RECORD'S A comeback whether you've been away for two months or, as in De La Soul's case, two years. Rap's harsh imperatives, its relentless regeneration and constant self-invention, are the very things that make it so compelling—and distance it from an increasingly enfranchised pop market.

Of course, this hardly makes for a cozy career opportunity, as De La Soul is now discovering. When the Long Island threesome loped onto the scene in 1988 it gave voice to a new black bohemianism that was at once suburban and urbane, politically aware and strictly nonbourgeoise, multicultural and strongly rooted in African-American experience. De La Soul's benign sophistication marked an important break with hip hop tradition: Besides being markedly more secure in their manhood than most of their I-grab-my-crotch-'cause-I'm-top-notch precursors, the group liberated itself from the suffocating orthodoxy of rap's standard sampling canon. Succinctly put by *Village Voice* critic Greg Tate, the De La ethos was Fear of No Music, combining

Photography/Art by Stephen Sprouse

de-flowered

As external pressures on the group mounted, De La Soul found itself

soft rock, '60s beats, show tunes, country, funk, and quirky miniatures into a work of unalloyed Afro-eccentric genius.

Dance label Tommy Boy launched the 23-track *3 Feet High and Rising* album with an inspired marketing campaign, which brought the company the top-selling independent record of 1989. More importantly, in breaking De La Soul the company placed hip hop firmly on the college curriculum, irrevocably altering the face of the music and influencing new age MTV soul children like Lenny Kravitz, Deee-Lite, and Urban Dance Squad.

Last year the locus of hip hop invention was A Tribe Called Quest's *People's Instinctive Travels and the Paths of Rhythm*, basically a streamlining of the De La formula into a comfortably paced album free of the inconsequential skits and loopy "bug-out pieces" that can sometimes make De La Soul rather wearing on the nerves. At close to a solid hour of amblin' entertainment, *Travels* cleaned up critically, the *non plus ultra* of hip easy listening. (Which is by no means a put-down.)

And hip hop's metamorphosis continues with the likes of Gang Starr, Brand Nubian, Main Source, and the numberless others who swell the ranks of rappers looking for a title shot. In the face of such a fierce struggle for primacy what does De La Soul do? The band comes back with an album called *De La Soul Is Dead*, is what. Talk about pitching underarm to your critics. . . .

"It's all about dying and being rejuvenated as something else," explains Posdnuos while the final touches are put to the new record. "I don't know what, though; when we came out we were just being De La Soul, doing what we wanted to do—then the press said we were reminiscent of the '60s and so on. So once again," he shrugs, "whatever they name us they're gonna name us."

Labeling De La's sophomore effort might prove troublesome, since it's a markedly low-key affair with little of the exuberance or showily eclectic (and rather litigious) sampling that distinguished the group's debut. It was not, however, the handsome out-of-court settlement exacted by the Turtles, the sampled '60s survivors, that spurred the rethink. "The Daisy Age," Trugoy maintains, "was supposed to be about 'Da Inner Sound Y'all,' but instead of taking it on that level everyone focused on the flower, so it was time to go about things in another way.

"It gets to the point when a group matures—" he continues, "—after a while people knew that the Jackson 5 weren't gonna be little kids anymore, doin' the dances and stuff: They were gonna grow up. Hopefully that's how the crowd's gonna accept us."

De La Soul does not begrudge the massive influence that *3 Feet High* has had on rap's current generation. "The first album was something totally different that happened when rap was really taking off," says Posdnuos graciously. "By taking it to another level we gave a lot of other groups the opportunity to do the same. There's nothing wrong with that—it's no different from how I've been influenced by other artists."

Trugoy feels disinclined to jockey for position among the leaders of the new school. "I feel our job is done as far as taking that step higher," he says. "Now it's time for someone else to take the baton. We never sit down and say, 'Oh man, Tip's album sounds real good and Brand Nubian, they're comin' off with the Uplift the Black Race stuff—let's try to keep in stride with that so we can stay up with the heavyweights.' We just do our thing—'cause that's what we like. Sure, we'd like to please our audience but the music is personal, we do it for us."

"Why do people think that just because we speak peace
We can't throw no joints?"
"Yeah, well my tolerance level has now peaked
And it's time for some heads to get flown."
—introduction to "Pease Porridge," De La Soul

HOLD ON. WAIT A MINUTE. SOMETHING'S wrong here. This can't be De La Soul talking, the beatific beat-box beatniks; the cuddly cartoon characters who, if they hankered after street credibility, found only the *Sesame Street* variety; the first rappers to make it, lest we forget, to the hallowed pages of *Cosmopolitan*.

If such a thing is possible, Tommy Boy's marketing campaign worked *too* well, almost burning the band out with the worst case of overexposure since Rob Lowe's big ol' butt. Forever saddled with the glib moniker "hip hop hippies," and Day-Glo–painted into a corner, De La Soul found itself fighting off the flower-child stereotype. Literally.

"When we went on tour last year certain negative people would start trouble with us," recalls Pos, who's recently traded in his vertiginous 'do for a close crop, which with his deliberate manner

questioning "positivity," the unexamined pop-cult buzzword of recent years.

lends Pos a rather professional air. "Punk little kids goin' around thinkin' that just because we got daisies in our video we're soft. So they started trouble with us and we kicked their ass. Just because we speak about peace doesn't mean we can't defend ourselves and kick much ass."

"We got into a lot of tiffs," Trugoy says demurely, "but we never provoked anything. People took it to the point where they thought we were just plain simple, y'know—suckers. *Then* if we got into a dispute other people would accuse us of contradicting ourselves. But as far as bein' hippies, this was brought about by the record company; I mean everybody wants peace but to have peace you got to have war—you know what I'm sayin'?"

All this pugilistic payback brought about an unthinkable scenario: De La Soul was asked to leave the L.L. Cool J tour for perpetrating violence. Who'd have believed *that* one in 1989? (Certainly not the folks at *Cosmo*.)

De La Soul Is Dead is peppered with references to these events, but the most striking departure, and the album's most compelling cut, is "Millie Pulled a Pistol on Santa," a morose meditation on incest whose taut narrative echoes Aerosmith's "Janie's Got a Gun."

"We always deal with things that apply to our own lives," says Pos, "and I know a young friend who was going through that problem, her father was abusing her. I was really upset about that and just applied it to wax—that's all it was. Same thing with 'Brother Is a Basehead'; I have an older brother who was on crack; he's in rehab now. Again I applied the situation into that song."

Although *3 Feet High* had the antidrug "Say No Go" and the cautionary slice-o'-life "Ghetto Thang," the personal edge to the new tracks on *De La Soul Is Dead* gives the group's music heretofore-absent resonance. This was not, Pos stresses, an attitude that the group deliberately set out to cultivate. "It wasn't like, 'We're gonna be so hard on this record.' It was just that you knew one side of De La Soul, now here's another; it'll be the same on the third album, and so on.

"When we made *3 Feet High and Rising*, we were younger and had less to worry about. Once it took off life got hectic, friendships and relationships changed, and we went through the whole nine of being in the public eye. Negative things happen and you learn how to deal with them. It'll be like that continuously through all our albums—whatever we learn we apply."

As external pressures on the group mounted, De La Soul found itself questioning "positivity," the unexamined pop-cult buzzword of recent years. "I think in a positive frame of mind," says Trugoy, "but nowadays you've got to look at the negative and learn from it, not cancel it out. It went too far, until everyone was just saying, 'Be positive,' without going too deep into it. This album isn't negative but we address the negative here and there to let you know it's still working. So beware of it."

On *De La Soul Is Dead* the group has replaced the game-show format that linked the tracks on *3 Feet High* with an altogether less jovial running skit where three characters critique the tunes in terms that would bring a blush to Roger Ebert's cheeks. The group insists that this extraordinary bit of self reference, this—if you will—"heavy meta" is not a preemptive strike against its critics but simply a nod to the neurosis of their producer/mentor, erstwhile Stetsasonic DJ Prince Paul. Now *there's* a concept: the Woody Allen of hip hop.

"Tommy Boy want another 'Say no'—huh!"
—"Pass the P's," De La Soul

BOTH BLACK RADIO AND POP RADIO ARE PRETTY finicky about what rap records they're going to play," says Tommy Boy's flame-haired president, Monica Lynch. "Historically speaking the records that have gone the distance in those formats have been the records with a very, very catchy chorus or a musical sample that your 35-year-old program director can understand."

Lynch is illustrating how *3 Feet High*'s success was expedited by the use of the Top 40 calling card, "Me Myself and I," with its George Clinton-penned hook. With the new album however, there was no frantic search for a radio-friendly leadoff single. "Some rappers," Pos explains, "are afraid to lose what they had so they end up repeating themselves; we felt no pressure from the first album."

Whereas Prince Paul would once impose his admittedly commercial sensibilities on the group, he took a back seat during the recording of *De La Soul Is Dead*, letting the group turn down several of his more pop-oriented ideas. "This time it was more of an art thing," notes the diminutive genius.

cont nued on page 82

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Just when you think you know what it is... It's MTV. By illustrator Gene Greif.

MTV MUSIC TELEVISION

One in a series

COOL RECORD LABELS

Matador Records is New York City's coolest rock label in years.

SO I'M SITTING IN MY HOTEL ROOM WATCHing MTV, and that damn Dustdevils video comes on again. What is this, like the fifteenth time today? I wonder how much Matador had to pay to get that thing in heavy rotation. I mean, the girl is cute, but . . .

Okay, maybe not. Maybe there isn't a Dustdevils video in heavy rotation on MTV. Maybe there isn't a Dustdevils video at all—Matador can scarcely afford to keep its back catalogue in print, much less dole out the bucks for a video. But that's not the point, is it? At Matador, New York City's coolest new independent rock label in years, the point is music, not exposure. Label founders Chris Lombardi and Gerard Cosloy (you may remember him from Homestead Records, the label he ran in the mid- to late-'80s that served as erstwhile home of such indie luminaries as Sonic Youth and Dinosaur Jr.) aren't looking for any particular *sound*—this isn't a Sub Pop thing waiting to happen. In fact, it pleases the boys if you say you really hate one or more of their bands almost as much as if you say you love them. It pleases them because they're looking to provoke a reaction.

"We signed the Shams and the Unsane at the same time," says Lombardi. "Their music is almost exactly opposite—the Shams are sort of folk-pop and the Unsane are kind of noisy."

The label's roster, while unquestionably diverse, does tend to be weighted more heavily toward the "noise" end of the indie-rock spectrum: Labelmates Railroad Jerk, Dustdevils, the Unsane, and H.P. Zinker (Matador's first release, in January 1990) all bear superficial resemblance to each other in terms of the powerful dissonance each trades in. The thing about noise bands, though—good ones, anyway, and the ones on Matador are mostly good ones—is that the noise is beside the point. It's a means to an end, and the ends are as diverse as the personalities that comprise the bands.

Probably the most successful band currently on the Matador roster is the Scottish noise-pop combo Teenage Fanclub, whose debut, *A Catholic Education*, was easily one of the best records of 1990. TFC is planning to start work soon on a follow-up LP that Matador hopes to release sometime this summer. It'll probably be the band's last album for the label, however, as wolf packs of major record labels have been heard baying at TFC's door.

But even if the majors snap up TFC, Matador is sure to come up with enough innovative, exciting new bands to keep your interest over the next few years. Maybe they'll even sell enough records to make a Dustdevils video one of these days.

JIM GREER

DANIEL CORRIGAN

Amphetamine Reptile, based in Minneapolis, has been churning out consistently great music for five years.

THERE HAVEN'T BEEN TOO MANY GREAT independent labels of late. You know—labels that record collectors and in-the-know hipsters talk about in hushed tones, labels that you buy every single release from whether you've heard of the band or not.

Amphetamine Reptile *is* a genuinely great independent label. In its five years of existence it has cranked out over thirty 45s of primo nihilistic punk rock, including some seminal and soon-to-be influential albums—at a time when indie rock has devolved into something often generic and boring.

AmRep's roster looks impressive enough on paper: Helios Creed, formerly of much-revered Chrome, has released his finest work since that band's *Half Machine Lip Moves*; Minneapolis-based Cows have released a couple of LPs of hard bop played by punk-rock hicks; Manhattan's Surgery is busy counterfeiting AC/DC riffs but has thankfully yet to master the technique, and probably never will, which keeps its stuff sounding like Pagans-cum-New York Dolls skronk; Vertigo are an off-chance meeting on a dissection table between Barrett-era Pink Floyd and a herd of stampeding hippopotami. All these groovy discs come complete with graphics that show how far you can take Macintosh layout programs if you handle them with the same finesse with which a gorilla attacks a banana.

Tom Hazelmyer, the man behind Minneapolis-based Amphetamine Reptile, started the label as a way of getting records out by his own amazing band, Halo of Flies. The initial releases were beautiful handmade seven-inch singles in numbered editions of 200, 400, or 600 copies, and the music was almost always brilliant. Hazelmyer began releasing LPs in 1988, but the emphasis has continued to be on singles. A series of EPs called *Dope Guns & Fucking in the Streets* has reached its fifth installment: These little seven-inches are compilations of tunes by four different bands, some signed to AmRep, some not. Mudhoney made its vinyl debut on a *Dope* compilation, and other scuzz-rock bigwigs on the Sub Pop gravy train, such as TAD and the Dwarves, have contributed to the series.

It's 1991, and independent rock'n'roll is not dead. One of the primary reasons that it survives, and even thrives to some extent, is the existence of labels like Amphetamine Reptile, whose consistency of vision has led to a sustained stream of vital music. So listen up.

JOHAN KUGELBERG

Cool Career Move

ICE-T in *New Jack City*

SCOTT COHEN takes a trip to the movies with rapper-turned-actor Ice-T.

ICE-T'S FIRST ACTING EXPERIENCE came in front of security cameras—as a street hustler playing the part of a yuppie. He'd walk into a jewelry store and say to the salesman: "My father's in the area buying land—he's a real-estate developer—and I'm going to UCLA to be a lawyer. My mom and dad have been together twenty-five years, and I'm interested in buying them a 3.2-karat, flawless, emerald-cut diamond." Then as soon as the salesman handed him the ring, he'd be out the door. "Being an actor," says Ice, "is really being a liar—a professional liar."

Now the rapper is a star in the new shoot-'em-up drug war movie *New Jack City*. The hardest part about making this career move was having to play a cop.

"I was uptight with that," Ice confesses. "It took me all this time to get people to trust me, so why do I have to give credit to the police now? I have an antidrug message, but I don't know if I'd ever have such a hard line against drug dealers as to kill them. I still have a lot of compassion for their situations. But people stepped in and said, 'Ice, don't let your ideals get in the way of this opportunity. We need more people in acting who are *real* like you. Ten minutes after the movie, people will forget you were a cop anyway.' "

New Jack City is the black *Scarface*. It could be the first authentic "black" movie since the original *Superfly*. And it's the first gangster movie in a long time where kids with beepers and guns under their belts cheer the drug dealers' deaths instead of rooting for them. It's like cheering their own deaths. That's how dope the movie is.

"Remember, this movie came through the Warner Bros. dissolution factory," Ice says. "We made the movie hard-core. But the reason you might not see everything in the movie that would happen in real life is because Warner Bros. wouldn't let it happen. You can shoot a *Total Recall* where Schwarzenegger rips a guy's arm off and beats people up, but you can't shoot people basing. We show a black teenager with a gun and it's more terrifying to the movie company than any horror monster from outer space."

Four films Ice-T would like to remake and star in: *Mad Max*, *Friday the 13th*, *Scarface*, and *The Terminator*.

Some directors he'd most like to be directed by: Francis Ford Coppola—"I liked the big, sweeping scenes in *Apocalypse Now*"; Brian DePalma—"he's pretty hard-edged"; and the late Alfred Hitchcock. "Also, Dennis Hopper, although I wasn't too crazy with how *Colors* came out, and Steven Spielberg for how he did *The Color Purple*. Things our producers couldn't get past Warner Bros. wouldn't be challenged if they were made by him."

As a kid, Ice-T and his crew snuck into a lot of karate

AARON RAPOPORT

and horror films. "Basically we'd go in to talk to girls or steal somebody's purse. I didn't sit there and absorb the films. I still have the worst taste in America as far as films go. I go to the video store and I'm renting '*Blood Bath Stewardesses* and '*Texas Chainsaw School Girls.*'"

Some of his favorite TV shows when he was a kid: *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave It to Beaver*, and *My Three Sons*.

"But after a while," Ice says, "you can't watch those shows no more. You ain't got as much furniture as them. It's another world. Watching a drama about white people in suburbia and how they're living ain't me. Even the Flintstones are white. The only cool cartoon characters, the only ones with soul, were Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck—they were definitely black. And I don't know anybody living like the Cosbys, who's got a doctor father and a lawyer mother and nobody gets whoppings. I was always violence-oriented. I think when there's nothing on TV you can relate to, you can always resort to violence because that's all you know."

Ice-T's current role model is Cher. "She can do *Silkwood* and come off very conservative, then be butt naked on a battleship the next week. The key is to do both well. For me it can't be Ice-T rapping, Ice-T trying to act. It's got to be Ice-T rapping and Ice-T acting."

The person Ice-T would most want to play him in his own life story is Chuck D. "I want somebody who's close to me and knows where I'm coming from," he says. "I'd be afraid to put a regular actor in my position. You'd have to go through the strife I've been through to understand it."

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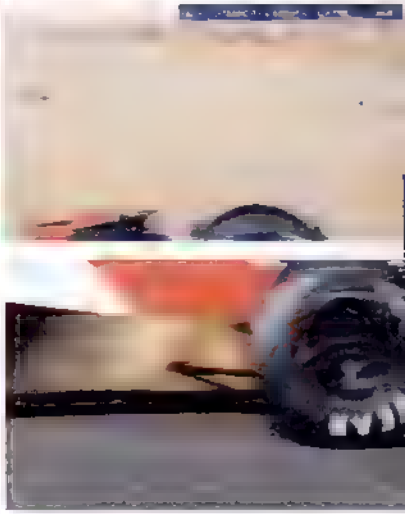
Speed Racer

Fast Cool

Ayrton Senna is the fastest driver in the history of Formula One auto racing.



DEAN KUIPERS watches the 30-year-old Brazilian cheat death for a few more laps on his way to becoming a legend.

THE SCIENCE OF MOTOR RACING has changed forever, because for now, it has a god. A driver too uncompromising to live. In the press room above the finish line at the 1990 Spanish Grand Prix, the shades were drawn against the brutal desert sun, and the 150 reporters had abandoned the track for the TV monitors as the second day of qualifying laps got under way. Directly below us, a 3.5-liter Honda V10 engine shrieked to consciousness in the McLaren garage, No. 1 on pit lane, and love swelled the room. Every day the Formula One race begins with the same devotional: Today young Ayrton Senna of Brazil will show us the unimaginable.

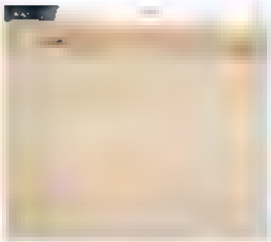
Little smirks creep onto the faces of all the statistics freaks whenever F1 driver Senna hits the tarmac. For even on off days, he holds within himself the *ultimate lap*. Or the ultimate fuck-up. Which makes him a dream date to the 1,600 reporters accredited by the racing federation who, oddly enough, can't get an interview. Senna's legendary powers of concentration, of visualization, have heightened the technical precision of everyone involved with F1 racing. In the motor homes down in the paddock, one oft-repeated claim is that not only will Senna always find the fastest line through any curve, but if you mark two points on that curve with a piece of tape, he won't miss the tape by more than an inch during the entire 60 to 80 laps of an F1 race.

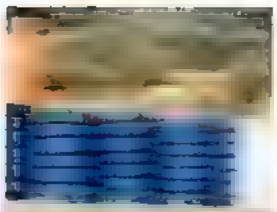
JEREZ IS A DESOLATE TRACK BUILT BY SHERRY barons in the treeless southwest of Spain, far removed from the usual metropolitan or seaside resort settings of such races as Monaco or Imola. The press room at Jerez is about 40 yards off an 180-mph straightaway, and at those speeds the F1 car wheezes like an A6 Avenger in an attack run. Everyone is wearing earplugs. The smell of ozone and iron sparks scraped from the belly plates of these cars hangs in the air—the cars use only two inches of suspension travel.

When the 1991 Grand Prix season opened in March in Phoenix, Ayrton Senna had been F1 world champion twice in the last three seasons—the only three in which he's sat in a car that the pros deemed "competitive." In 1989 he finished second because of a contested legal ruling to France's Alain Prost, a teammate at McLaren with whom Senna has developed a blood feud. Senna has just finished his sixth year as an F1 pilot, but has only driven half as many races as the other legendary drivers who are now running behind him most of the time: Prost; Nigel Mansell (England); Nelson Piquet, his predecessor as Brazil's national hero; and Riccardo Patrese (Italy).

I get sweats when watching Senna in the pits, seated still as a stone in the No. 27 McLaren, his gorgeous, boyish face watching the qualifying times flash on a small monitor, composing a vision of the physical limit. Every record he doesn't own already will fall to him in time. A highly religious man, Senna is content to say that only God knows.

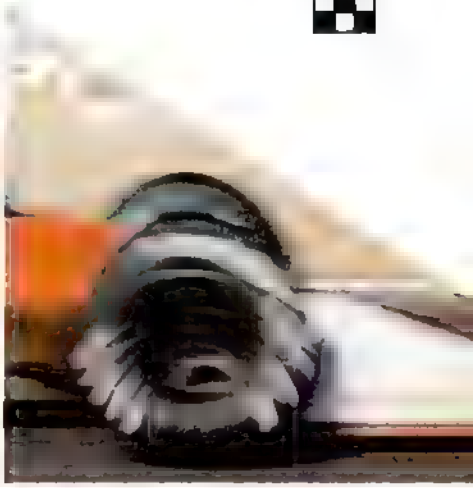
By the time the 1990 F1 Grand Prix carnival rolled in here, Senna was set to take the world





Above, the 3.5-liter Honda McClaren V10 racing machine that Senna is making history with.

Right, two-time Formula One champ Ayrton Senna watches F1 qualifying times. *Below*, Senna psychs himself up to break another record.



championship. The championship is decided by a point total in which drivers count their best 11 finishes of 16 races. As usual, the team championships had come down to a runoff between the superb 1990 Ferrari driven by Prost and Mansell, and the McLaren piloted by Senna and Gerhard Berger.

Below us in the pits, a half-dozen Honda wizards revved the world's most expensive engine. If the engine isn't right in morning qualifying, they can install an entirely different one in the space of an hour. The only factory to send their own semitrailer laboratory to every race, Honda won't give even soft figures about how much they spend on F1 engine development. The real figures would make Indy racing look like an arcade game.

Money, in fact, is one of many taboo topics in F1—reporters are forced to live off insider's tidbits they report as "consensus figures." Honda, for instance, built five different versions of their V10 in 1990. And Ferrari allegedly spent $90 million just developing their fingertip gearshift levers. I asked a Belgian journalist who was giving me a cost outline if Honda spent $100 million a year on F1. "Unlimited," he said flatly. Two hundred million? "There's not an answer," he repeated. "Unlimited."

JIM CLARK WAS KILLED WHILE DRIVING A Formula Two race in the rain in Germany in 1968. Gilles Villeneuve crashed and died in '82. Elio De Angelis in '86. Died exactly like 50 of the other drivers since F1 began in 1950. The other wunderkinds. The comparison of Senna to Clark has given birth to a specter that Senna chooses not to acknowledge. That specter was close by in Jerez, but it visited a 26-year-old driver named Martin Donnelly instead, in a yellow Lotus. Senna was watching.

At the opening of the afternoon qualifying session, the sweating, jabbering press corps were gathered at the TVs again, where the lap times are visible in the lower corner of the screen. The track was hot and very fast. The morning times had already broken the track record. There were sporadic cheers as some writers' personal favorites or countrymen challenged the lead time.

And there, in the middle of the blazing, melted track, lay Donnelly. The TV camera crew suddenly cut to Donnelly's inert body sprawled there in his yellow suit and helmet, looking for all the world like an astronaut fallen back to earth. He didn't move. Even on TV you could see that his leg was shattered, bent completely in the wrong direction. He was still strapped into his seat, which had been ripped from a monocoque chassis made of Hercules Aerospace carbon fiber, one of the hardest materials known to man.

The curve was a gentle right-hander that the drivers take in sixth gear, flat out. Donnelly missed the curve and went into the metal guardrails nose-first at somewhere around 160 mph. The only two photographers who were standing at the corner said the car went up like a bomb.

A trackside fireman touched Donnelly's helmet and backed away. I was startled by the transformation that had come over the press corps. The German seated next to me slammed down the lid on his computer with a look of pain and just said over and over, "*Er ist tot. Er ist tot.*" A flood of grief rose around me, and I blankly realized that about a third of the people in the room were softly crying.

I bolted for the track. Donnelly looked dead. Senna bolted out of the McLaren trailer and to-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFF MARGROVE

ward the curve where Donnelly lay. He stood at the fence, grief-stricken, looking from Donnelly to the scattered debris of the Lotus. The paramedics arrived and literally pulled Donnelly back from the other side. They found a pulse. Donnelly began breathing. Senna quickly walked the two hundred yards across the paddock to the pits, suited up, and sat in his car to wait, his face empty again.

F1 racers drive the quickest gasoline-engine cars on the planet, bar none. The tiny 3.5-liter engine produces a glorious 680 British horsepower. They go from 0 to 200 kilometers per hour (125 mph) in 4 seconds. The F1 cars, unlike those of any other competition, generate so many *tons* of downforce when they brake from 200 mph that they don't spin—they stick. And the drivers withstand four Gs; that's four times your body weight trying to fly out of the car. It's blackout time. The power is so explosive that weight minimums were built in to protect the driver, and turbocharge boost is now illegal.

Senna waited. Fifteen minutes after the accident, the ambulance rolled into the track hospital. Donnelly's Lotus teammate, veteran Englishman Derek Warwick, was frantically pounding on the hospital windows, shouting "*Piloto! Piloto!*" Ten minutes later, the track was cleared of debris, the oil scrubbed off.

The track marshals decided to reopen qualifying. Most of the drivers, including the Ferrari team, chose not to run. Senna was first out on the track, rolling carefully to warm his qualifying tires. Then, of course, he did what is only possible for him to do. The McLaren shrieked as though Senna had transferred his rage to the machine, shrieking in the face of death, and eclipsed the standing lead time by over a second—an eternity in a universe built on thousandths of a second. One of the pool writers from Brazil started sobbing as he watched Senna roll to a stop.

I was standing behind the McLaren pit as Senna brushed by minutes later. I followed him as he walked directly to the hospital and went inside. The wind picked up the dust. A doctor came out and told us Donnelly would live. Five minutes later Senna emerged, looked at the small crowd, and walked toward the pits alone. Only then did he burst into tears.

SENNA NOT ONLY DOMINATES F1, THE HIGH END of motor sport—he has owned every European circuit series of the past ten years, from go-carts to Formula Three. Moving in a pocket of candid silence, seeking and taking the advice of very few, he has proven that he can win in anything with four wheels.

Ayrton Senna da Silva got a competitive go-cart at age 10 from his father, the owner of a São Paulo car components factory and over 400,000 hectares of Brazilian farmland. In his first year of racing, at the age of 13, he began to win everything at a São Paulo carting track called Interlagos. By 1977 the 17-year-old was both Brazilian and South American champion, a feat he repeated for the next three years.

Senna has always been a man very much removed from the *Days of Thunder*, Saturday-night-at-the-fairgrounds, dirt-track stock car scene that Americans have come to understand as

In the past Senna has proven so madly competitive that he would rather crash than be passed. Being

unable to accept second place has led to his legendary unpopularity among other drivers: Senna is not a good ol' boy.

the milieu of tomorrow's Indy and North American Stock Car Auto Racing stars. That homegrown dream only works in the U.S. The rest of the world buys into a team in England, the capital of motor racing.

In 1981, Senna paid for a year in Formula Ford 1600 by losing a championship for the first time in his life. So he quit and went home to work for his dad, Milton. To many Senna mythologians, the period between the '81 and '82 seasons was a time when Ayrton, a 21-year-old boy with an unnerving ability to concentrate and also diagnose mechanical problems, decided he was going to become F1 champion. He came back to England in 1982, having divorced his popular wife, Liliane, and raced Formula Ford 2000.

Team manager Dennis Rushen has reported that Senna showed up at the track at Brands Hatch for the first race of the 1982 season without ever testing. Senna took that race by a whopping 14 seconds. He never really lost again. Senna was only beaten twice in 28 starts that year, took the championship, and immediately began bargaining for the F3 car that would take him to F1. By the second race of the season, at Oulton, he'd also created his signature race tactic: Beat everyone to the first turn *by any means necessary*, and always race in front.

The 1983 Formula Three season: Senna, 132 points; Martin Brundle, 123. By season's end, he signed with Toleman to drive F1. Early in 1985, driving a Lotus F1 car at Estoril, all of us discovered the other manifestation of Senna's genius: He cannot be beaten in the rain. To this day, he has not finished an F1 race less than first in the rain.

WHO WILL BEAT 30-YEAR-OLD AYRTON Senna in 1991? The answer is the man more willing to stare down death. In the past he has proven so madly competitive that he would rather crash than be passed. Being unable to accept second place has led to his legendary unpopularity among other drivers: Senna is not a good ol' boy.

Prost and Senna first began feuding when they became teammates at McLaren in 1988. Senna categorically refused to let Prost pass, even when it hurt the team. He then drove the race of his life in the rain at Suzuka, Japan, to take his first world championship. In 1989, Senna crashed both of them out of the race by nosing into Prost during a turn at Suzuka—Senna got a $100,000 fine, went before a tribunal, and lost the championship. The two have brought their war back there every year. In 1990, they crashed each other out of turn one, lap one, at Suzuka.

But this simple refusal to lose goes over big with teams and even bigger with sponsors. And thus 30-year-old Ayrton Senna has become the highest-paid athlete on the planet. His McLaren contract alone was reportedly worth $12 to 15 million. With sponsorships—who knows for sure? The consensus figure for 1990 is somewhere near $25 million. In comparison Joe Montana pulled in a $4 million salary last year, plus $1 or 2 million in endorsements. Buster Douglas, the highest paid American athlete, is making around $19 million. And you haven't seen any Senna tennis shoe ads yet, not even in São Paulo. There haven't been any.

Senna, it seems, has only to stay alive in order to join the greats in racing history. A handful of giants have been champion three times: Jack Brabham, Jackie Stewart, Niki Lauda, Nelson Piquet, and Alain Prost. And then, off in the distance of another, perhaps incomprehensible racing era, rests Argentinian Juan-Manuel Fangio, who took the Grand Prix title five times (1951 and '54 through '57).

Three days before the Spanish Grand Prix, Senna spied me waiting for him outside the McLaren motor home. I'd been pressing for an interview for two solid weeks. He'd only given one exclusive interview during 1990.

He put his hand on my shoulder and said in English, "I know you came all the way from San Francisco and you have been patient. But I cannot interview until I am world champion."

But that was to be 3 weeks and 10,000 miles away in Suzuka. I got in one question: "What makes you so good?"

"I have put aside everything in my personal life to dedicate myself to racing. I have given everything to it. And I love what I do." ⊕

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AIDS

WORDS FROM THE FRONT

Don't (Don't, Don't) Believe the Hype

The results of a three-year study on AZT raise serious doubts about its usefulness. Dr. Michael Lange, a leading AIDS and infectious disease specialist, discusses AZT and the new study with CELIA FARBER.

I'M BEGINNING TO ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR AZT The way you'd feel sorry for a talentless child whose parents keep dressing it up in shiny clothes and trying to make it tap-dance, when in fact it can barely stand on two feet.

In August of 1989, the National Institutes of Health announced that AZT had been found effective not just in treating AIDS but also in preventing it. They pointed to an NIH study which supposedly proved that when AZT was given to people who had antibodies to HIV but had not yet developed AIDS, it slowed the onslaught of the disease "significantly." Despite the fact that the study—which was intended to go on for three years—was stopped after only nine months and that the data was not yet published, it was established that anyone with a T-cell count below 500 should take AZT as a preventive measure against AIDS (that meant approximately 650,000 people in the U.S. alone). The press, having access only to a two-page NIH press release and not the study figures themselves, trumpeted the news without hesitation: "HIV positive patients are twice as likely to get AIDS if they don't take AZT." Posters sponsored by AIDS organizations and Burroughs-Wellcome, the pharmaceutical company that makes AZT, were plastered on bus stops and subways, urging people to get tested for HIV because early intervention with "new treatments" could now "put time on your side."

Although the claim was scientifically premature and unsubstantiated, the rush for AZT was on, and doctors around the country were urged to prescribe a cancer-causing chemotherapeutic drug as a long-term prophylactic for AIDS in *healthy* HIV positive patients—patients with no symptoms of AIDS, and who according to statistics had an excellent chance of remaining symptomless.

Meanwhile, researchers at the Veterans Administration on the West Coast and in Europe were reaching very different conclusions about AZT in HIV positive people asymptomatic of AIDS [people with HIV who have not developed any of the opportunistic infections associated with AIDS]. One year ago, V.A. investigators reported on their observations after two years of a three-year study designed to resolve the question of long-term treatment with AZT in asymptomatics. Already then they saw "no statistical difference in progression to AIDS," and said that deaths in both the placebo and the AZT groups were "virtually identical."

This year, on February 14, the V.A. confirmed their preliminary findings, adding new and even more dismal facts. "Early zidovudine [the generic name for AZT]," they reported, "resulted in transitory benefits in whites and neutral or harmful effects in black and Hispanic patients." As reported by the *New York Times*, the study said that AZT does slow the development of symptoms in some people with HIV, but that "people who took the drug before they had symptoms lived no longer than those who took it after they had symptoms." The study also showed that black and Hispanic patients had a significantly higher death rate in the group that took AZT from the beginning than the group that took AZT only after dipping below 200 T-cells.

Another very chilling fact to emerge was that in the group who started taking AZT early, some died of causes "not related to HIV infection." The causes of death were listed as adenocarcinoma of the lung, large-cell undifferentiated lymphoma, heart failure, suicide, motorcycle accident and murder. Of the ten patients who died without first developing AIDS, the study reported, "all were in the early-treatment group."

"We're fussing and fuming with a therapy that's not very good," one doctor told *New York Times* reporter Gina Kolata. In the *Times* article, three leading doctors expressed deep resentment that they had been led to believe that their asymptomatic patients should be on AZT. "I find the information from the V.A. study disturbing," said Dr. Richard J. O'Brien of the Federal Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta. He said that he had been very enthusiastic in recommending AZT for patients without symptoms of AIDS in the past, adding, "Now I won't be."

Meanwhile, the FDA—who, let's not forget, approved AZT for use in asymptomatics based on questionable and incomplete studies—sent out a press release to doctors that can best be described as a masterpiece of doubletalk, claiming that the V.A. study "reaffirmed the drug's usefulness in treating individuals who are at less advanced stages of infection with the AIDS virus,"

EMILYA NAYMARK

without even *mentioning* the fact that AZT was shown to have no beneficial effect on survival.

Something is rotten, no question about it. And honest doctors in positions of authority seem to be virtually nonexistent. But not entirely.

One doctor who has been a scrupulous critic of AZT from the beginning is Dr. Michael Lange, an infectious disease specialist practicing at a large teaching hospital in New York City. He was on the panel that the FDA consulted in 1987, when AZT was approved, and he expressed deep concern about the release of the drug in those meetings and in the follow-up meetings in 1988. In 1989, Lange told SPIN, emphasizing that his views on AZT were his personal opinions, "I personally do not prescribe AZT unless a patient insists. I have continued to find that patients survive longer without it."

SPIN: When we last spoke you were very concerned with the widespread use of AZT in asymptomatics. Now studies have confirmed the uselessness of AZT in "delaying" AIDS. Your fears have come true. What is your reaction?

LANGE: I think it is very disturbing, to say the least. The thing I was most concerned about when using AZT in asymptomatic people was that this is a drug with *known* long-term toxicity. Since we talked in 1989, that's become even more clear. The August 15, 1990, issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine* substantiated further the fact that people taking AZT for two to three years had a 45 percent incident of developing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. What, then, is the benefit of AZT? We keep throwing around these terms—"beneficial," "usefulness," "in general was beneficial." These terms are exceedingly poorly defined in this study. If you take an AIDS patient, particularly an asymptomatic AIDS patient, how do you determine if the drug is beneficial? Take a patient with three hundred fifty T-helper [immune system] cells, and you know that person has a 50 percent chance of remaining healthy for at least the next three years if you do nothing. In order to catch the 50 percent that will go on to develop symptoms, you're going to give all 100 percent AZT? In the 019 study, when it was stopped, the average person had taken AZT for only nine months, which is an insignificant time period based on the projected time. If there was any benefit to be had with AZT it only lasted about six months. After that, CD4 levels (T-4 cells, or immune cells) dropped to below the initial point; HIV levels, measured in as p24 antigen, came back up, and we now know that resistant virus [virus strains that are unaffected by AZT] shows up.

SPIN: How do you feel about those posters that advertise AZT for asymptomatics?

LANGE: The posters and advertisements for AZT are highly unethical, because they are advertising something as fact that is not known. The real question is, Who are the people who stop these AZT studies so soon after they've started? It happened both times, for the approval in 1987, and for the use in asymptomatics in 1989. If it was, as they say, "unethical" to continue a study, then why bother even having any scientific review of it? The antiviral advisory committee to the FDA had no input into stopping the AZT studies as these had been stopped months before. Thus, even if they had decided that the studies had been inadequate, there would have been no way to continue them. If 019 had been carried out for the entire three years planned, the outcome between placebo and AZT may have turned out to be just as insignificant as we now find to be the case in the V.A. study.

"The posters and the advertisements for AZT are highly unethical, because they are advertising something as fact that is not known."

—Dr. Michael Lange

SPIN: Why is AZT being *pushed*, rather than simply offered? It's being hyped to the point where people are made to feel guilty—as if they're not participating in their wellness and recovery—if they don't take AZT. The atmosphere is not rational.

LANGE: Yes, it is very disturbing. I have been worried that I will be sued for malpractice for not prescribing AZT. But really, most of my patients come to me because they know I'm not a great fan of AZT and they're looking for other potential answers. The pressure to prescribe AZT has been intense, absolutely. Now it's let off a little bit. From what I hear, during the last year, a lot more doctors in New York are disillusioned. They don't think AZT is as good as they had hoped because it's been around for three years and people are still dying in flocks.

SPIN: Last time I spoke to you, you didn't feel able to go on the record with anything about AZT. Has that fear lifted? Do you still feel there are certain things you'd like to tell me about AZT but you can't? Or do you feel you can speak absolutely openly to me about it?

LANGE: About the treatment issues, I can speak perfectly openly. Because a number of people have reviewed this, and the drug clearly has not held up to promise. AZT has been available for investigational studies now for five years. If it was working in stabilizing disease or making it a chronic disease, which is what the AZT advocates are saying, the death curve of people dying with AIDS as predicted in 1986 should have gone down. To my knowledge it has changed somewhat. The AZT advocates, of course, are saying this is due to AZT. Patients are living somewhat longer if they are being taken care of by doctors who understand the disease. But this is just as true for patients taken care of by doctors who in general do not prescribe AZT. Hence the differences may be due to primary care PCP prophylaxis [treatment to prevent the pneumonia that is the leading cause of AIDS deaths]. Although the window of opportunity is closed now, what we really would have needed in 1987 was comparison of AZT to PCP prophylaxis.

SPIN: This fierce commitment to a particular virus, HIV, and a particular drug—AZT—was it a random selection? In other words, why *that* virus and *that* drug? And why do scientists and health-care workers have such a strong, visceral reaction when the topics of HIV and AZT are broached?

LANGE: Because, as you know, at the NIH overall, medical funding has gone down, and the one thing that has greatly increased is funding for AIDS. The government has not increased its health funding overall; it has taken away from cancer research, cardiology research, and so on, and given the money to AIDS. And hence it has created very, very powerful financial blocks in different medical schools and hospitals. There's no doubt that the way the system works is that you are judged and your power rises in an institution—be it university or hospital—according to the money that you bring in for research. The institution gets a lot of money, in the form of indirect costs, for the scientists who bring in this money, and so what you're attacking here is the very foundation of all of this power. The foundation is built on HIV and AZT. All the money—I think you wrote it in an earlier article, what is it . . . three hundred million dollars for the ACTG [AIDS Clinical Trials Groups]? And 80 percent of them have been studies on AZT.

SPIN: The core thesis of the AIDS activist movement is that not enough money is being put into AIDS because the government doesn't care whether "undesirables"—gays and IV drug users—die. But what you said earlier about money being moved from other areas of medicine into AIDS would suggest that that thesis is incorrect.

LANGE: I think the thesis is incorrect. I mean, cancer and heart disease still kill a lot more people than AIDS does. Certainly almost all scientists and clinicians bemoan bitterly the fact that money has been shifted into AIDS from diseases that also should be rightfully explored. I think the money given to AIDS research has been very, very generous. Would better work be done if more money was available for AIDS research? I'm not at all convinced. On the other hand, what I would strongly support is a more open discussion. We do not know the pathogenesis [causation] of this disease. And we were very early forced into a very

continued on page 84

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ANTIHERO

OPINION

I WAS TRYING NOT TO STARE AT THE SOLDIER'S shattered skull. I was trying to look at his torn and sliced face with the detached eyes of a professional mortician. But everywhere I turned, another military corpse screamed for my attention.

Here, inside the Desert Storm mortuary at the Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, were the grisly reminders that phrases such as "smart bombs" and "surgical strikes" are merely public relations jargon for the nightmares of war.

I had hied my way into the morgue because only here could I see the uncensored images of war; only here could I escape the unprecedented military-media collusion which so sanitized the war for its cheering American audience. And only here could I discover how many American soldiers really died in the war.

During Desert Storm, military officials took unprecedented measures to assure that the American public would not see the blood and agony of war. Correspondents were assigned to media pools, shadowed by military escorts, and subject to military censorship. In one instance, reporters were forced 200 yards away from the burning wreckage of an Army barracks hit by an Iraqi Scud missile. Photographers who skirted military police barricades were ordered to relinquish their film to the U.S. military.

Dover Air Force Base is home to the U.S. military's largest mortuary. The casualties from Desert Storm are nothing for a facility that has seen between 50,000 to 60,000 corpses roll through since its official opening day in 1968. Nearly 22,000 U.S. soldiers killed in Vietnam visited Dover. The 913 Kool-Aid–drinking followers of Jim Jones were embalmed here.

Flag-draped caskets being rolled across Dover's tarmac was a television image throughout the '80s. A customary ceremony developed out of the reception of the dead by their families. Here the nation publicly mourned its dead—from the Beirut Marines to the Challenger astronauts.

During the Panamanian invasion, the networks used a rare split screen to simultaneously show both the President's speech explaining the invasion and the first coffins arriving at Dover. The Department of Defense was probably hoping to avert this type of news coverage when it announced—the day before the air war against Iraq began—the cancellation of public ceremonies at Dover. Captain Christian Geisel, the public affairs officer at the base, explained that the decision was made to "avoid hardships for families who would feel obligated to attend from great distances." When Geisel was asked if members of the press were allowed to visit, he said, "No, it's an off-limits press area. To be real honest, I don't know if you'd want to be inside the mortuary."

AFTER A FEW DRINKS AT A TATTOO PARLOR LAST summer near Howard Air Force Base in Panama City, Panama, I found a group of U.S. soldiers who said the U.S. casualty figures for Operation Just Cause were roughly three times the official Pentagon figure of 23.

Dozens of American paratroopers, said these soldiers, were accidentally killed by their own troops—"friendly fire" in the Pentagon's words—as they parachuted into the Panamanian city of Rio Hato.

"I personally counted sixty-seven bodies," said a private, a member of the 24th U.S. Air Force Supply Division. The private, who asked that his name not be used, had a simple but gruesome task during the invasion: He scrubbed clean the bloody corpses of U.S. servicemen. When asked about the official Pentagon figure of 23 bodies, the young man scoffed, "Hell no, I counted more than that," adding with a cynical laugh, "that was the first hour."

No major newspaper of record has confirmed or covered this story, which I reported first for the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* in September; it was subsequently featured as a top ten "censored story" in a Bill Moyers PBS special that aired in late February. The Pentagon has admitted to at least two instances of outright distortion about casualties in Panama.

One month after the invasion, 11 U.S. servicemen died while participating in an air assault against a remote Panamanian village. The two helicopter crews were searching for rebels and crashed in a driving tropical rain. When the U.S. military authorities in Panama first announced the death of the 11 servicemen, it was described as a routine "training accident."

In another instance, three months after the invasion, the Pentagon admitted to the *L.A. Times* that it cooked the ratio of civilian to military dead in the invasion of Panama by classifying murdered civilians as combatants. Only one sixth of the 314 dead Panamanians that the military claimed were enemies were actually soldiers.

Vietnam offers other documented instances of Pentagon distorting or underreporting military casualty figures. In 1971, the country was shocked to read of extensive Pentagon documentation of Vietcong casualty figures.

The U.S. government has repeatedly lied about military casualties to play down the fact that wars are always paid for in human currency. Fearing that Desert Storm casualties were being underreported, JONATHAN FRANKLIN posed as a mortician to get an unprecedented look inside the Dover morgue.

I AROUSED NOT A HINT OF SUSPICION. THE MORTUary was not that organized. In late January I had called on a hunch that they might welcome the services of an unemployed mortician. I first spoke with Charles Carson, the director of the mortuary, who delayed his retirement in order to do his duty in Operation Desert Storm. He referred me to an answering service, which I later found out was little more than a device to screen out reporters. (I've since read in the *Boston Globe* that 45 news organizations have their names on a waiting list to interview Carson.) I experimented with the last two digits of the phone number and soon found myself talking to a hearse driver inside the morgue. He happened to pick up the phone just outside the busy embalming chambers.

I told him I was calling from Boston and that I had a pizza-chef brother living in Dover who I could stay with if there was work for me. He enthusiastically offered to escort me through security and tour the facility. I accepted.

Based on a tip that the ground war was imminent—from an old college roommate who works for a senator—I arrived at the mortuary February 28. Thirteen fresh casualties had arrived that morning.

My friend the hearse driver met me at the guarded gate. When I checked in, the only official documentation I produced was my driver's license. I was asked for my embalmer's license, but I pretended I had left it behind in another suitcase. I also signed papers permitting an FBI background investigation. The morgue offered to hire me after asking a single question—"Can you start this afternoon?"

I was to be given a comprehensive tour of the facilities, and then begin work after returning to my hotel to retrieve the license I had failed to produce. Before the tour, I was asked to wait at a desk covered with documents, more than I could possibly have copied. I did manage to scribble the names of a dozen corpses to compare with the official casualty lists. (They were all listed—no

MARSHALL ARISMAN

scandal.) After 15 minutes of waiting and snooping, my tour guide arrived.

"This number here, that's the body identification number," he explained. His name tag identified him as an "inspector," which I assumed was a civilian title. Half of the approximately 50 workers I saw were inspectors, though I never discovered what this blue-coated army did beyond gather and gawk at the latest arrivals. The inspector escorted me to a back room that looked like a combination of a warehouse and a third world hospital emergency room. In a calm voice he recited the procedure for keeping the miscellaneous body parts with their original torso: Each part was numbered separately. "We've gone all the way up to fourteen," he said proudly.

We shadowed a body as it rolled along the assembly line of reconstruction. The bodies arrived half-frozen in plastic sacks straight from the airfield. Our job was to scrub, bathe, embalm, shampoo, reconstruct, and "cosmetize" the corpses for free home delivery. A cluster of bored FBI agents fingerprinted the cadaver for positive identification, and then steered the body to an X-ray machine.

"Why X-ray the dead?" I wondered out loud.

"Unexploded ordnances," explained the inspector. My mind spun with the vision of a hapless embalmer exploding after boring into the equivalent of a human land mine.

We passed through a storage room lined with half-open caskets. The plush white padding shimmered, not yet stained by the inevitable decay of a corpse. Rolls of packing foam and boxes of a plaster-like cement stood next to crates of Permaglow, a brand-name embalming fluid.

"This room wasn't here a month ago," my guide explained as we entered the cavernous embalming chambers. A stainless-steel trough, like a drinking fountain for horses, cut across the room. Gurneys were tidily parked against the trough, patiently waiting to dump the blood of fallen soldiers. One hundred soldiers a day could be embalmed here.

We skipped past the "restorative art" room where two workers methodically painted the illusion of life upon the faces of death, and stepped through a set of double doors into a room filled with uniforms and the innumerable trinkets that decorate them. Here the dead soldiers were packed into immaculate starched uniforms, glistening black shoes, and stiff-brimmed caps. In a small cabinet with rows of plastic drawers sat a huge supply of medals, ribbons, and assorted insignia that the soldiers had lived and died for.

The dead do not lose their rank. Precise attention assures the warrior is buried with the exact number of these patches and pins. There were no shortcuts here in the attempt to put the face of glory over the agony of death. The dead I saw were mostly young, African-American men. All the ritual and rouge couldn't cover their last expressions: They looked like scared teenagers.

THE DEFLATED HEAD OF A YOUNG ARMY PRIVATE will always be in a corner of my mind. With his rotting eyelids pinned down, he was stretched out naked under the probing morgue lights. A

continued on page 83

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Just when you think you know what it is... It's MTV. By artist Alex Grey.

MTV MUSIC TELEVISION

One in a series

Platter du Jour

EDITED BY JIM GREER

THROWING MUSES

The Real Ramona

Sire/Warner Bros.

For some of us, the Throwing Muses' 1986 debut was one of *those* records, the kind that leaves you feeling your life has been changed in ways you can't define. Women friends have testified that it was the first time they encountered a purely female music of rage and bewilderment that spoke directly to them. Where male angst is directed outward at the world, female violence is implosive, turned inward to take shape in obsessive symptoms like anorexia or "delicate self-cutting."

Kristin Hersh's fractured lyrics and hemorrhaging voice seemed to be a musical equivalent, or possibly an alternative, to these self-destructive practices. But the ravaged grace of her "falling apart" never seemed like mere wallowing in misery, but rather was the first step toward rebuilding herself. Boys could identify too, since Hersh's songs were as much about adolescence as specifically female trauma.

As with a lot of first statements (e.g., the Smiths), the debut's cathartic purity of expression has subsequently proved something Throwing Muses have been unable to live down or live up to. They've made brilliant records (*House Tornado*, the *Chains Changed* EP) and dull ones (*Hunkpapa*) but nothing as unsettling and unleashed as *Throwing Muses*. Perhaps it comes down to the contradictions inherent in making your living "on the edge." But if *The Real Ramona* is a return to form, this surely has everything to do with the fact that last year was one of the worst years in Kristin Hersh's life, packed with traumas every bit as agonizing as those that inflamed the debut album, only of a more adult nature: the breakup with her longtime lover and a bitter legal battle for custody of their son, Dylan, followed by further legal turmoil with the Muses' former manager.

At their peaks, Throwing Muses have been like an icy inferno. *The Real Ramona* sounds like the aftermath of self immolation. Kristin's voice is burnt-out and ashen. The schizoid song structures and jarring tempo changes of old have been straightened out even further; David Narcizo's drumming, once the panic pulse of their music, has been subordinated to the role of dutiful timekeeper But although the Muses have never sounded prettier, the shiny surfaces are scarred by deep furrows of corrosive pain. Only the outright power pop of "Not Too Soon" sounds remotely jaunty.

The opening "Counting Backwards" could pass for funk, but Hersh's vocal makes it clear this is the dance of a mind in disarray. These songs are examples of Throwing Muses' haunting conventional forms, playing (at) pop more successfully than on the confused *Hunkpapa*. As for the turbulent folk-punk that has hitherto been the Muses' forte, "Golden Thing" features some unearthly yodels and deranged vocal pirouettes, while "Hook in Her Head" is as baleful and forbidding, ragged and raucous, as the group have been in years. As good as these returns to tempestuous form are, the closing "Two Step" is better still. Like the lovely but tragically brief track, "Dylan," that closes the first side, "Two Step" is a halcyon haze of ghostly harmonies and gilded guitar chords that evokes a mood of post-catastrophic languor.

Like *Hunkpapa*, *The Real Ramona* is probably another "transitional" album for the Muses. The difference is that, unlike its predecessor, it leaves me impatient to find out where that transition will take them.

Simon Reynolds

ILLUSTRATION BY SUSAN DECANTE SPINS LOGO BY CHRISTOPHER GALLO

MORRISSEY
"KILL UNCLE"
King Leer
Found Found Found
Driving Your Girlfriend Home
The Harsh Truth Of The Camera Eye
(I'm) The End Of The Family Line
There's A Place In Hell For Me And My Friends
Tony The Pony

WORLD BEAT

Highlife

BY RICHARD GEHR

IN THE COOL-HOT CAMELOT OF African music, international renown is often rewarded with a flamboyant *nom de succès*. King Sunny Ade, Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey, Seigneur Tabu Ley Rochereau, Prince Nico Mbarga, and Dr. Sir Warrior Opara are only a few of the more imposing honorifics. The first crowned head of Africa's royal house, however, was a modest Ghanaian named Emmanuel Tetteh "E.T." Mensah, famous throughout Africa not so very long ago as the King of Highlife. Four tracks by E.T. Mensah and his Tempos kick off *Giants of Danceband Highlife*, one of two indispensable new Original Music compilations that chart the music's urban transformation from the horn-driven '50s through the sparky-guitar '80s.

The minstrel-man swath of white paint around E.T.'s mouth in the 1956 photo, reprinted in John Collin's *Musicmakers of West Africa*, looks downright bizarre, particularly since the beaming gent to his right happens to be America's own king of crossover jazz, Louis Armstrong. E.T.'s brand of jazz-inflected African traditionalism, however, was closer to the "sweet" dance-band sound of the appropriately named Paul Whiteman, but mixed with calypso, Congolese rhythms, and Cuban rumbas and cha-chas.

Highlife's long and funky gestation began about a century ago, when coastal towns were introduced to military brass bands and sea shanties, while missionaries confused everyone with lost-in-translation gospel hymns. "Highlife" was the name given by outsiders to the top-hat-and-tails ballroom scenes enjoyed by the urban elite during the 1920s, but the village brass bands and rural "palm wine" guitar groups went by the same moniker.

E.T. picked up on swing during World War II, and his many African tours after launching the Tempos in 1948 disseminated highlife throughout the receptive continent and inspired hundreds of imitators. E.T. ruled during the '50s, but the music continued to develop in such bands as Jerry Hansen's Ramblers in the '60s and Stan Plange's Professional Uhuru in the '70s, who warrant eight and ten tracks respectively on *Giants*.

With chugging straightforwardness, the Ramblers' horns sometimes sound more like Jamaican ska than Cuban swing. But the band's trademark sound has more to do with its beautiful vocals—dusky, breathy two-part harmonies that remind me of Mexican *norteñas* and *rancheros*. But the dooky all came together when the popular Broadway Dance Band changed its name for legal reasons to Professional Uhuru in 1964. In these tracks, lifted from a 1970 Afrodisia recording, you'll hear palm-wine rhythms, gospel harmonies, and the complex call-and-response of the Ghanaian street music called *konkomba*. Not to mention *charanga* flutes and *mambo* rhythms from Cuba. "Eyaa Duom" brackets swinging Afro-Cuban jazz with a *konkomba* chorus and stormy sound effects, while "Ali Wuo" sets a traditional fishermen's work song to a seaside ambience.

VARIOUS ARTISTS
2 Nasty 4 Radio
Cold Chillin/Warner Bros.

Jack Thompson has said repeatedly at our many debates that he probably has as large a rap collection as anyone in the country—ironic, considering he leads the crusade against what he deems to be the virulently anti-social aspect of rap, especially 2 Live Crew. As much as I disagree with Thompson's position—which is much—I thought it would be interesting to get him to review the two most explicit-lyriced rap compilations

VARIOUS ARTISTS
Explicit Rap
Priority

available. I asked him to do so. He accepted.

—Bob Guccione, Jr.

This past autumn, Bob Guccione, Jr., asked me to pen a review for SPIN of two rap-music compendiums. Bob jolted me with this offer while the two of us were at 37,000 feet, winging our way to our sixth college debate on obscenity in three days.

I wondered if jet lag had addled the brain of my newfound friend, since asking this bluenose to review two sexually explicit record albums reminded me of the old joke "Other than that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play?"

Once I realized he was serious, I wondered what the trick was, where the ambush lay. But remembering that in less than a week I had discovered Guccione to be as deceptive as Pikes Peak, I responded: "I'd love to!" Thus, as we enter the Twilight Zone, submitted for your approval:

The album *2 Nasty 4 Radio* has the counterproductive, sales-boosting PMRC "Tipper sticker" on it, of course. The other compilation, *Explicit Rap*, has nothing on its album cover *but* the "Tipper sticker." As an in-your-face-you-prudes graphic, this cover would be hard to beat.

Let's take an excerpted look at the "art" we're dealing with here:

2 Nasty 4 Radio

Cut 1. "Brothers Ain't Shit," Roxanne Shanté. "They're looking for the next big ass they can stick / But this here chick's not on your dick."

Cut 3. "Talk Like Sex," Kool G Rap & D.J. Polo: "Because you'll leave in a wheelchair, dear, after I lay ya . . . / Bite your nipples when I lick them / I leave them looking like a rape victim."

Cut 7. "Fuck Everyone," Everlast: Bragging as an art form. The title says it all.

Explicit Rap

Cut 1. "Me So Horny," 2 Live Crew: "I won't tell your momma, if you won't tell your dad / I know he'll be disgusted when he sees your pussy busted."

Cut 3. "Cusswords," Too Short: "Ask your wife, Nancy Reagan / I know she'll spit that game / Like one night she came to my house and gave me a blowjob / She licked my dick up and down and like it was corn on the cob."

Cut 10. "Wienie Whistlers," Bobby Jimmy: "I love to be done by a chick with no teeth . . . / Do you take *dick*-tation? . . . / While you're at, it don't forget the balls."

There is no way to comment about this stuff unless you know what it is. There is nothing on these albums but raunch and brawl, except for three cuts. Ice-T's "Freedom of Speech" on *2 Nasty* is a brilliant statement of the absolutist view of the First Amendment. The intermingling of Jello Biafra's pontifications, as bizarre as they are entertaining, enhances its edge.

On *Explicit Rap*, Ice Cube's "The Product" is a rageful but insightful look at the shameful pain wrought in black America by white America's racism and callousness. Likewise, the Geto Boys' "No Sell Out" is an invigorating defense of rap as a cultural force for black liberation.

Three socially redeeming cuts out of 21 is not a good batting average (.143) in any league. Therein lies the tragedy at the heart of rap, substantially deepened by these two albums: Two record companies, Warner Bros. and Priority, have packaged what is some of the cruelest rap, labeled it with titles admitting its unsuitability for radio and children, yet proudly held it out as some of the best of rap.

Is this indeed the best that rap has to offer? Of course not. Rap can be, and is, great stuff, unless it is proviolence, prorape toxic waste that hurts its targets and darkens all our souls.

But that's true of any art form. What rap needs, if it is to get the respect it already deserves, is to figure out who the real guardians of its soul and worth are. They are not to be found at Warner Bros. and Priority. They're to be found among those who care enough about the First Amendment not to have the rap message of "The Product" sullied by the crap message of "Me So Horny."

Jack Thompson

THE LEAVING TRAINS

SLEEPING UNDERWATER SURVIVORS

THE LEAVING TRAINS throw down such a "fuck you" sound on their new LP, you'll be sore with perverse pleasure. Head Train, Falling James, continues to wage a war upon what most people swallow whole on a daily basis, so wake up and suck up SLEEPING UNDERWATER SURVIVORS, produced by Earle Mankey. (SST 271 LP/CA/CD).

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(SST 071 LP/CA/CD)
FUCK
(SST 114 LP/CA/CD)
TRANSPORTATIONAL TO VICES
(SST 221 LP/CA/CD)

the FLESH EATERS

DRAGSTRIP RIOT

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Also Available:
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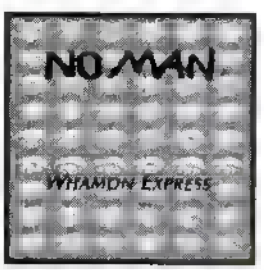
(SST 094 LP/CA)
PREHISTORIC FITS
(SST 264 LP/CA/CD)

NO MAN

WHAMON EXPRESS



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FLAT DUO JETS

Go Go Harlem Baby

Sky Records

Back when people actually paid attention to them, the Stray Cats used to talk a good game about recapturing the spirit of rockabilly. But what poseurs like Brian Setzer never seemed to grasp was just how *crazy* all those early rockabilly cats were. As the Crispin Glover of rock'n'roll singers, Flat Duo Jets leader Dexter Romweber understands this better than most. Hell, he does better than that on *Go Go Harlem Baby*, emoting a creepy edge that Jerry Lee Lewis himself would be hard-pressed to match.

For the most part, *Go Go Harlem Baby* reprises the formula from the Jets' 1989 debut. It has a couple of wacky instrumental knockoffs ("Harlem Nocturne," the Ventures' "Wild Trip") and plenty of obscure covers to go with some nifty new ravers. Throughout, Romweber manages the nifty trick of making decades-old songs sound both timeless and brand spankin' new. His gothic "Ask Me How I Live," one of the album's six originals, sounds like it could have been written by Kurt Weill.

"You Belong to Me" and "Don't Blame Me" are particularly evocative—slow-burn ballads that spotlight Romweber's quavering, expressive voice. When he bears down and wails *"Dooooon't blaaaaame meeeee,"* it's hard to tell if he's pleading or threatening. That's something Jerry Lee Lewis would understand, all right.

David Menconi

THE FEELIES

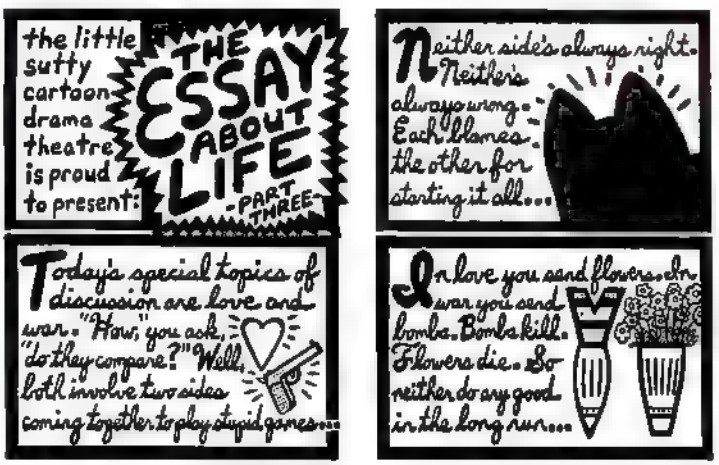
Time for a Witness

Coyote/A&M

The Feelies' music has always been as much about texture as about tunes, songs with a shape more vital than a hook. Even if they've become a more standard rock'n'roll combo than when they first dribbled onto the scene over a decade ago, the Feelies still feature the same fuzzed guitars, percussive mantras, and vocals that display a range between downright flat and comatose. Nowadays, the guitars don't sound quite so weird, and there's more emphasis on spacey art-rock solos than before, but this seems only to prove that rock'n'roll has expanded to catch up with them.

On the new *Time for a Witness*, their choogling, rhythmic guitars move them from the realm of right-on Lou Reed ("Decide") to not-quite-Aerosmith ("What She Said"); tossed in for kicks is the Stooges' "Real Cool Time"—on whiskey, cough syrup, and psychedelics. Al-

Little Sutty's Quest for Music *by Mark Blackwell*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In love you send flowers. In war you send bombs. Bombs kill. Flowers die. So neither do any good in the long run...

though their mission isn't to produce immediately catchy, hummable tunes, and they may never return to the geeks-on-electroshock perpetual nervousness of their first record, the Feelies' outpost on the edge of the realm of guitar pop is secure.

Andrew Jaffe

CHET BAKER

The Last Great Concert . . . My Favorite Songs, Vol. I & II
Enja

I might as well spit it right out. Chet Baker's posthumous American success pisses me off awesomely. Within two years after he fell out of a window on Friday, May 13, 1988, he was elected to the *Down Beat* Hall of Fame, Bruce Weber's documentary film about him, *Let's Get Lost*, became a huge success, and a portion of his autobiography ran in SPIN—while no one in the U.S. in the '80s thought he was worth beans while he was still alive. In Europe, however, he had long been revered for playing some of the best jazz music you'll ever hear anywhere—one reason I live in Europe. So much for pissed-offedness.

Quincy Jones once said he trusts his goose bumps. Trust mine: Go out and buy this record. Try to ignore the prestige package, a German big band which is both too German ("Just doing my duty, sir") and big-bandy ("more fiddles, Max"), and listen to the toothless junky trumpet player whose looks were compared in his 20s to James Dean and in his 50s to an old Indian on mushrooms .

There are better Chet Baker records. *Chet's Choice* (Criss Cross) from 1985 with Belgian guitarist Philip Catherine and *Once Upon a Summertime* (Artists House) with Gregory Herbert for two.

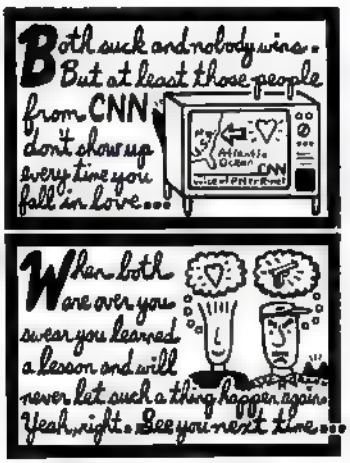
Some black cats don't appreciate Chet because he was white. They have small minds. A few fans of each race consider him a Miles Davis spin-off. They have tin ears. If compare you must, he's right out of Lester Young, a master spinner of melody, a Mozart of improvisation going straight to the heart without pretension, screeching, or flag-waving.

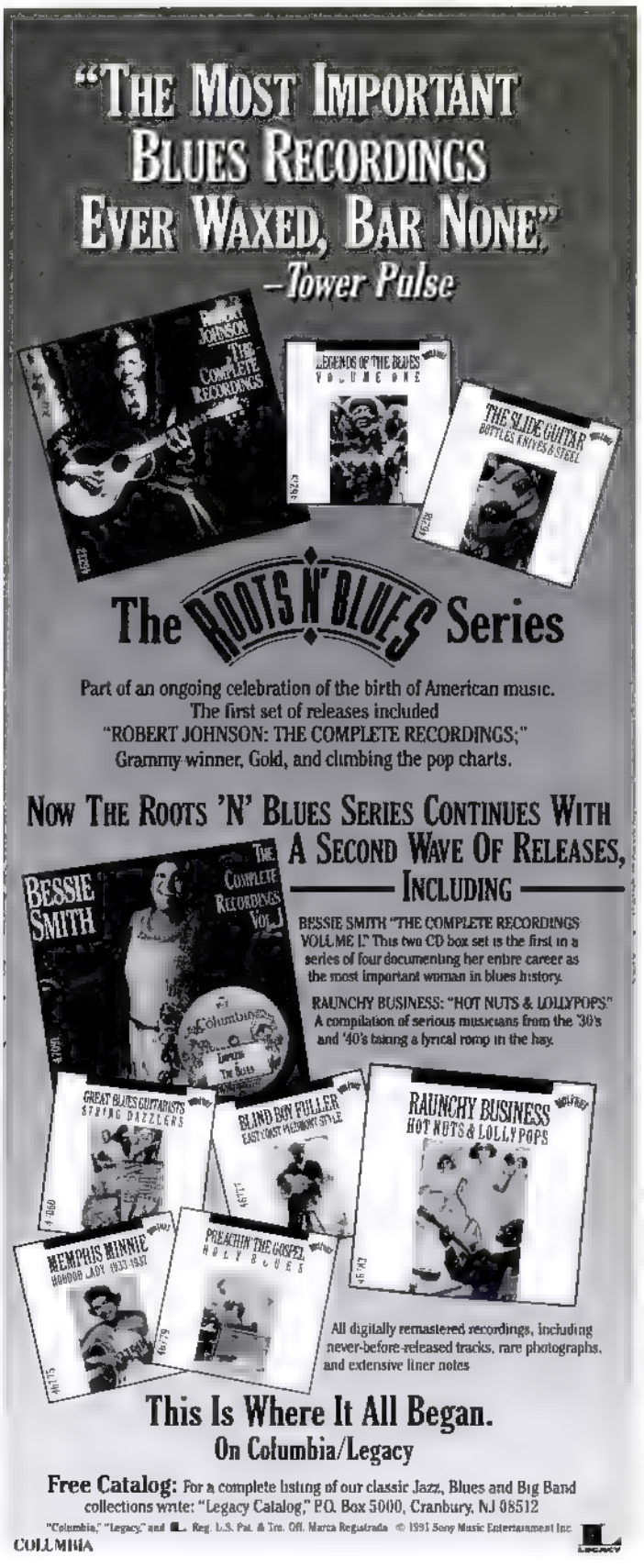
Chet was summertime, but the living wasn't easy. There were sad nights, when the shit was cut or there was none. There were empty nights, when he didn't show up at all. But on a good night, and there were many, you heard the real thing—so fragile, in the slot, touching rather than impressing you

This live recording was on an Indian summertime night, drama in the soft breeze (Chet missed the rehearsals, the principals were nervous). A good night.

Mike Zwerin

Sting has been known to sing about both...
Oh can't yoooo seeee, you be-long to meeee
...the Russians love their children too.
When both get heavy it's wise to wear the protective gear...
KRAZY VONDOM'S
-MARK BLACKWELL-


Both suck and nobody wins. But at least those people from CNN don't show up every time you fall in love...
Atlantic Ocean
CNN
When both are over you swear you learned a lesson and will never let such a thing happen again. Yeah, right. See you next time...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Cassette to Run

BY BOB MACK

THE TERM *CASSINGLE*, LIKE *infotainment* (or KRS-One's more didactic-sounding *edutainment*), is mediaspeak: a language of postmodern shorthand that uses pseudo words like *mediaspeak* to better evoke the frenzied sense of information overload that supposedly characterizes our age. *Cassingle* is to words what Goober, a combination of peanut butter and jelly created in the '70s, is to snack food. Instead of having to unscrew both a jar of Skippy *and* Smucker's, Goober freed up just a little more time for other pursuits; saying cassingle rather than "cassette single" represents another advance in new world order efficiency.

Fortunately for those of us who never even learned Pig Latin or Esperanto, cassingles are on the way out. Though the list price has been raised from $2.98 to $3.49, they are still not profitable—even if sales are good. In addition, as Tommy Boy's sales and marketing VP, Steve Knutson, points out, "[They] cannibalize record sales." As Knutson explains it, "The base audience that buys rap is more song- and radio-oriented, rather than artist-oriented. The single for **Digital Underground**'s **"Humpty Dance"** went platinum, but they didn't know who the hell DU was. I feel we lost album sales 'cause all they wanted was the single."

Maxicassettes are the taped equivalent of 12-inch vinyl singles. They contain four to six tracks (mostly remixes), come in regular

THE GORIES
I Know You Fine, but How You Doin'
New Rose

THE FARMERS
Rock Angel
Flying Fish

Though there's no explicit language or violence on the Gories' debut long player, *I Know You Fine* may be the most frightening, harrowing album in a decade. Sounding like the rock'n'roll parties portrayed in status-quo Hollywood films from the '50s and early '60s, this trio brings the intensity to a boil, embracing and controlling reckless abandon. Their ten original tunes fully capture the menacing spirit written into the select bluesy covers, which include "Smashed," "Goin' to the River," and "Ghostrider." Hell never seemed closer than "Six Cold Feet." Produced by Alex Chilton, this bass-less band from the dark side invites comparisons to the Cramps. But the comic relief of theatrics which relieved the pressure of early Lux and Ivy is replaced here by the jagged edge of a whiskey bottle. Excruciatingly wonderful.

The Farmers are also a trio that includes no bass, but they dwell in a different neighborhood from the

tape boxes (not cardboard slipcovers), and—most importantly—are cost-effective. Like cassingles, "there's a psychological thing there, too," says Knutson. "They look like candy." Like seven-inch singles with picture sleeves or miniature cereal boxes and vodka bottles, cassette singles are consumer-friendly—fun to mix and match or trade with your friends!

***Above*: De La Soul. *Left*: Digital Underground's new EP.**

NO STRANGERS TO ESTABLISHING an image via record sleeves, **De La Soul** is more concerned these days with avoiding the sophomore jinx. And they should be. It's not that ***Ring, Ring, Ring (Hay, Hay, Hay)*** is un-fun; the music and delivery are fresh as ever. But the subject matter—a gripe about would-be rappers bugging De La to get their demos signed—seems out of place and a smidge arrogant. The maxicassette has two flute solo mixes, but who wants shop talk on top of beats?

Though it's tough, there are ways to avoid so-so second albums. One way is to put out an EP instead. Another way is simply to be good. Digital Underground has done both, despite the fact that its current hit, **"Same Song,"** is linked with a movie starring Chevy Chase, Dan Aykroyd, and John Candy. Tommy Boy's Knutson says that retailers don't want "Same Song" to be released as a single so kids have to buy the six-song EP (which contains a nine-minute track, **"Nuttin' This Funky,"** that lives up to its title by sampling Miles Davis's "Fat Time"). "If we put out a single, the EP would be dead," says Knutson, who admits, "It's kind of fun fucking with the marketplace."

THE A LIST

Terminator X Featuring Bonnie & Clyde, "Homey Don't Play That" (RAL/P.R.O. Division)
L.L. Cool J, "Mama Said Knock You Out" (Def Jam/Columbia)
De La Soul, "Ring, Ring, Ring (Hay, Hay, Hay)" (Tommy Boy)
808 State, "In Yer Face" (Tommy Boy)
3rd Bass, "Derelicts of Dialect" (Def Jam/Columbia)

Gories. Simplicity and sunshine reign on this side of the tracks. When not played immediately following the above, the Farmers are a charming band with a good ear for melody despite a cloying tendency toward silliness. Drawing from Buddy Holly's love songs, their lyrics favor the "moon-June" school while their sound renders a me-and-my-six-string aesthetic, giving an intimacy and earnestness to the record that most big budgets can't match. Thanks to guitars sounding very much like guitars and a couple sharp tunes like "This Town" and "Baby Doll," *Rock Angel* is manna for rock'n'roll cherubs.

Robert Gordon

BEME SEED

Lights Unfold
Rough Trade

DON'T ask me to name the titles of any Beme Seed songs, or quote the lyrics. Actually, don't even ask me to listen to the band for more than 15 minutes at a time, though I like 'em plenty. Beme Seed is a prototypical late-night college radio band: weird, spacey, with little to say except to propose yet another version of avant-guitar noise.

The prominent features of this particular sonic landscape are warped female vocals and droney, distorted guitars, occasionally, the vestiges of

It's Art

the REMBRANDTS

The self-titled album from the Rembrandts. Featuring "Just The Way It Is, Baby" and "Burning Timber."

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a rhythm section peek above the horizon. Like most of the band's peers, Beme Seed is at its best when the band bears down and writes real, focused songs, and, like most of its peers, Beme Seed only manages a couple—the side openers, of course. But really, it doesn't matter much; plunk the needle down anywhere and you're likely to be carried away for a while on one more vision of postpunk alienation. Better yet, catch 'em on the radio, where you'll be on to the next vision before the limits start to show.

Ted Friedman

I, NAPOLEON

I, Napoleon
Coffee

Is it just my imagination, or do Canadian pomp-metal bands really have bigger brains and funny bones than the ones from everywhere else? Geddy Lee teamed up with Bob and Doug McKenzie once, and Voivod's eighth-dimensional umlauts have kinda made those guys a joke act from the get-go. Then there's local legends like Goddo (songs about driving school buses and getting migrained from playing guitars loud) and ex-Webster hose head Kim Mitchell. All are Labatt's-fed lumberjacks in the BTO/Guess Who tradition, and maybe for them the symphonic sissy-boom-bah is somehow taken for granted as part of everyday life.

Anyhow, the latest evidence for my theory is the Ottawan band I, Napoleon (or, okay, Californian with an Ottawan front man/mastermind). The band's rookie outing is your typical Zamboni-prog-in-some-ways-no-great-shakes-and-in-other-ways-cool-enough-to-get-by. They temper overinflated Queensrÿche melodrama with clodhoppy hooks, but there are surprising moments of eccentricity (Slaughter-as-Voivod grind sections, happy hum-along la-la-las, bebop-sax-and-piano-key chaos, flamenco flutters, poetry such as "at least I'm not some goddamned bore")

And how can you not respect a curling club who do a number called "I Am the Idiot" *and* one called "Concerto in D Minor"? The singer calls Mozart "fun music"—too much time in the land of ice and snow without earmuffs if you ask me, but it's our gain, right?

Chuck Eddy

WILLY DEVILLE

Victory Mixture
Orleans Records

The matchup of Willy DeVille and the grooves of New Orleans was made in a soulful heaven. De Ville, better but no longer known as Mink, has definitely not forsaken the stance and attitude that made him, if not one of the best white soul stylists in recent memory, certainly the hippest. The former Romeo of Loisaida has moved his gold-tipped walking stick to the Crescent City, where dressing like a plantation owner-cum-pimp is not only acceptable but expected. Surrounding himself with stellar partners, including Earl King, Barbara George, Dr. John, and Allen Toussaint, DeVille and company work their way through ten classic New Orleans songs.

To his credit, DeVille doesn't mine the typical musical catalogue; an obvious amount of thought and a fan's love went into the selection of the tracks. The end result is ample proof there ain't no place funkier than beautiful New Orleans, and Willy DeVille's sabbatical from recording was a tragedy that should never be repeated. *Victory Mixture* is pure heart, a lot of fun, and enough heat to get you through the winter doldrums.

Amy Linden

POP WILL EAT ITSELF

Cure for Sanity
RCA

Like American soulmates the Beastie Boys, the British band Pop Will Eat Itself is a buncha white punks with guitars who heard hip hop, realized it was far cooler than they'd ever be, and have been trying to catch up ever since. What they've come up with is one of the few credible rap/rock hybrids. Instead of futilely grafting hip hop onto the AOR it

buried years ago (as attempted by plodding poseurs like Faith No More and Urban Dance Squad, PWEI (like the Beasties) start from the real stuff. Then, into this sample-heavy groove, the band integrates its more rockish touches. *Cure for Sanity* deepens PWEI's immersion into hip hop even further, replacing the live guitars of prior efforts with even more sampled riffs.

PWEI isn't the most talented group of rappers, but the band has the virtue (unlike clunky shouters such as the otherwise funky Red Hot Chili Peppers, not to mention M.C. Hammer) of knowing its limitations. PWEI keeps the heavily British-accented vocals talky and on the beat, veering into tune for the melodic choruses. The result, like De La Soul's singsong, is an appealing substitute for skill. Other bands may get the hype, but PWEI's the one hitting the '90s knowing what time it is.

Ted Friedman

ELVIS COSTELLO

Mighty Like a Rose

Warner Bros.

In the 14 years since launching his angry young man persona on 1977's *My Aim Is True*, Elvis Costello has never failed to evolve and surprise with each new release. Not that all the records were good, but even the few that were bad were at least surprises. On his debut for the '90s, *Mighty Like a Rose*, Elvis pulls very few tricks from his sleeve (except for maybe the new wannabe ZZ Top facial decor). That's not to say that the record is bad. It's just plain Elvis.

Closer to 1980's *Get Happy!!* than anything else, *Rose* is simply a collection of well-crafted pop songs with a classic Elvis sensibility. Drawing from many different territories that he has previously explored, the material ranges from sparse acoustic numbers to haunting orchestrated ballads to screaming tirades. Elvis has always been at his musical and lyrical best when he's pissed, depressed, misunderstood, or just plain bitter, and fortunately he doesn't seem to be in such a great mood this time around.

Mark Blackwell

BOSS HOG

Cold Hands

Amphetamine Reptile

Fresh sludge from the NYC scene is like a shot of good whiskey—hard to swallow but feels good going down. *Cold Hands* finds the big-pig combo of Christina and Jonathan Spencer (ex-Pussy Galore) continuing to squeal and roll around in the mud and make it sound good. If you called it wild, wanton, ugly noise, you wouldn't be far from the truth, but they've had nurturing from Steve Albini, so you can be assured that they do noise right. Most of the vocals are way down in the mix and the beats and guitars are up, some have hints of blues guitar ("Pete Shore"). There's even a song, called "Duchess," that sounds like a song. I mean, it's even melodic, and it gets my vote for underground tune of the year.

"Domestic" sounds like minimalist Tom Waits. In fact, Waits would not seem out of place in this band. Boss Hog has also added a little thang called experimentation to its recordings: weird echoes, samples, backward tape loops. The band has even sampled a cat's purr and used it as the bass line on the instrumental "The Bug Purr." By enlisting the aid of members of Pussy Galore, Gibson Bros., Honeymoon Killers, and Unsane, Boss Hog has earned the right to be dubbed the Traveling Wilburys of the New York City underbelly.

Dan McMinn

PINK FLOYD TO BLACK SABBATH

From Dark Side of the Moon to the netherworld of heavy metal, two books that make the music come alive.

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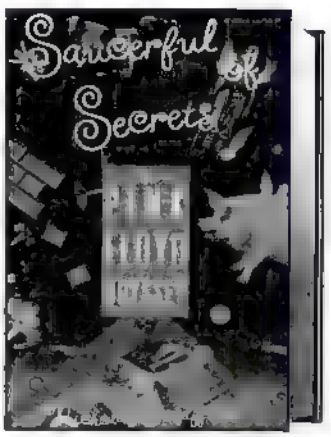

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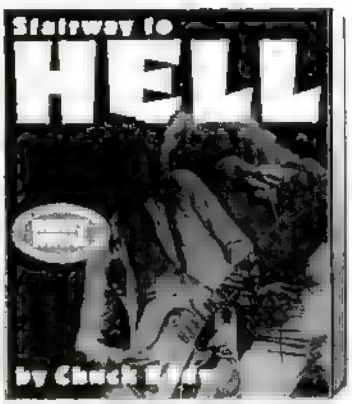

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John Lee Hooker

BY GAVIN EDWARDS

JOHN LEE HOOKER'S FATHER WAS A Baptist minister. His stepfather was a guitarist who played at local fish fries. For over 40 years, Hooker's music has hovered between damnation and Saturday night. The fourth of 11 children, he was born in 1920 near Clarksdale, center of the Mississippi Delta. He grew up hearing the blues sung by sharecroppers in the fields and Blind Lemon Jefferson on the phonograph. Hooker's initial attempts at the boogie came by strumming an inner tube pulled across a barn door; his country blues would receive full amplification when he reached the city.

His first urban effort came when he joined the Army at 14, to get girls. He was stationed in Detroit for three months before the Army discovered his age and threw him out. Rather than work the fields, he drifted through Memphis, where he sang blues, and Cincinnati, where he sang gospel. After ten years, he returned to Detroit. A janitor in a Chrysler plant by day, he sang in blues clubs at night. In 1948, he showed up on the doorstep of Modern Records owner Bernie Besman. That year, Hooker recorded "Boogie Chillun" for Modern. With a juke story and raging guitar, the song commanded the chillun to boogie. It was a massive hit.

Despite his contractual commitments to the Modern label, Hooker recorded for others under a slew of pseudonyms, including Boogie Man, Delta John, Birmingham Sam & His Magic Guitar, Johnny Lee, Texas Slim, Johnny Williams, John Lee Booker, and John Lee Cooker. To disguise Hooker's distinctive growl, some labels would speed up the tape. He constantly improvised in the studio and remade his hits for anyone willing to pay. The resulting body of work numbers over 100 albums. I can't imagine that anyone, even the Hook, owns them all.

Although he's played with scores of musicians over the years, the most compelling John Lee Hooker recordings come from the man alone. On his early recordings, he used his pounding right foot as the only percussion. Since the Hook often abandons standard 12-bar lines, he has thwarted many backing musicians trying to keep up with his eccentric beats. And when musicians impose steadier rhythms, as on a 1989 starfest, *The Healer*, Hooker sounds like a stranger in his own home. Canned Heat fares better on 1970's *Hooker 'n' Heat*, reissued by Rhino. Years of practicing to Hooker records allowed Canned Heat to play along capably, but the most blistering stuff on the album still comes from Hooker solo, on cuts such as "Alimonia Blues." Hooker's best collaboration with an admirer comes on the title cut of *Never Get Out of These Blues Alive*, a ten-minute duet with Van Morrison. With black-coffee voices, they trade black-coffee philosophy: "Van Morrison, he asked me, he said, 'Johnny, why do you sing the blues?' I know I'm doomed, I'm doomed, it's all I know."

DARDEN SMITH
Trouble No More
Columbia

Barely do an electric keyboard and an acoustic guitar fit together as comfortably as on Darden Smith's third solo release, *Trouble No More*. The album's dappling of Hammond B-3 organ sets a standard for the keys, so that rather than falling short of sounding like strings they function like a relative of the piano. King of the blue note, his vocals convey an aching of expression no matter what the emotion.

Smith's melodies ride a fine line between divinely catchy and John Mellencamp rejects. The title song is the latter, except when it's the former—the line is that fine. Same on the bubbly "Frankie & Sue," built on '50s teen pop, and almost sweeter than a strawberry shake. Hooks? There's hooks, but some of 'em could use a twist. And while nothing here really rocks out, that seems to be his (or his A&R rep's) choice—and I suspect a live performance of these songs could tear up a room.

The fact that he's riding so many lines could mean an album of compromises, but overall, *Trouble No More* maintains a solid vision.

Robert Gordon

OLODUM
10 Años
Sound Wave/WEA

Olodum—a few of whose members are featured on Paul Simon's *The Rhythm of the Saints*—is a 2,500-strong *bloco afro*, or cultural association, from Salvador, Bahia, the capital city of Brazil's most Africanized state. Like New Orleans's Mardi Gras "Indians," Brazilian *afros* work on their songs, drum routines, and costumes year-round, vying with one another in a cycle of festivals that climaxes in the annual *carnaval* parade.

10 Años collects a decade's worth of party anthems, with chorus and drum corps backing a shifting lineup of lead singers. The music is a mesmerizing cross between pop samba stripped to its raw essence and the ritual chanting of Yoruba-based *candomble* cults. The message is African consciousness—with tributes to Haile Selassie and Nelson Mandela—but the swaying, shuffling beat and bittersweet, slightly nasal lilt are pure Brazil.

Olodum uses *repiques* and *caixas* that crackle and hiss like snare drums over a cannonade of big, booming *surdos*. The rhythms have a relaxed, almost stately air while the chants throb and swell with pop-like hooks. Still, these studio takes, featuring a miniaturized 30-piece ensemble, can only suggest the real feel of *carnaval* in Bahia, where Olodum alone puts 300 drummers in the streets, plus hundreds more singers and dancers. Plane tickets, anyone?

Larry Birnbaum

THE WORLD OF SKIN
Ten Songs for Another World
Young God/Rough Trade

In time, M. Gira has come to scrape back the folds of roiling sonic bombast that dominated early Swans output and lay bare the Romantic, fatalistic poesy that sat at its heart. In time, he's learned (or maybe just a lowed himself) to pen a simple, pretty melancholic tune, taking more than a few cues from *Closer*-era Joy Division. In time, he's arrived at the beautiful, complex, foreboding post-industrial psalms that make up *Ten Songs for Another World*, the third album from the World of Skin.

Swans' *Burning World* was something of a misstep for Gira and Jarboe, his constant companion and collaborator in both World of Skin and post-*I Crawled* Swans. *Ten Songs for Another World* marks an impressive return to form, demonstrating the pair's by now considerable—and obviously still growing—ability to deliver a feral kick equal to vintage Swans using softer, subtler, more indirect means.

"Please Remember Me" mounts a choir of desolate synths atop tight-spinning acoustic guitar. Gira's vocal is brooding and reserved, the deep, dank calm that proceeds apocalyptic catastrophe. On "Everything for Maria," Jarboe weaves the icy, askew grandeur that New Order attained only once, on its requiem for Joy Division, "In a Lonely Place."

It's all lovely, if doggedly elegiac stuff that telegraphs the poetical intent of the lyrics—Gira and Jarboe coming out from behind the hostile "krunk'n'drazzle" of Swans, laying their sensitive sides out all naked and vulnerable. In my book, that's as hep as you get.

Howard Wuelfing

UNDER GROUND

Jim Thirlwell, better known as Foetus, makes records designed to wake you up. So wake up. By DEAN KUIPERS.

A LANKY BOY IN GREEN VELVET pants smoked the tires on his spray-painted Kawahonda-zukihama outside on the sidewalk, drowning out Industrial Dance Night for a moment at the shit-bag decafab bar next door to my apartment. The house electronics were juddering with *Thaw* by Foetus Interruptus. Two greasy goth slummers and a drunk hairdresser holding a pool cue were mouthing along to Jim Thirlwell, choking out the verse to "A Prayer for My Death": "The strain is showing as the veins pop outta the side of the head / They burst, bloodying the pristine driven snow / Dribbling in burning tributaries all the way down to San Antone."

A deeply unsettling record. Jim hung just enough irony in *Thaw* to make it playable in public—the big brass band fanfares and splatter-film/Bugs Bunny soundtrack dynamics. Even Chuck Eddy, and Jimmy Johnson and Byron Coley at *Forced Exposure*, just walked around their kitchens, arms flapping, going, "Fuck. Fuck. Fuck," when they got *Thaw*.

Thirlwell has, it seems, disgorged a zillion records since he left Melbourne in 1978: the ceaseless shrieking of his many personas. Clint Ruin. Wiseblood, with the Swans' Roli Mosimann. The Foetuses: F Under Glass, F Uber Frisco, Phillip and His F Vibrations, Scraping F Off the Wheel, You've Got F on Your Breath, F All Nude Revue, F Interruptus. Film scores for Richard Kern and others. Scores for live performances and recordings with longtime paramour Lydia Lunch and just about any other Gothamite you can think of. Lots of it you can take with six fingers of Sauza, and watch Jim's devilish visage seep out in a plasma, one enormous smirk. But the liquid tissue that makes them all kin, that bears the Thirlwell imprimatur, is the music's manifestation of psychotic rage.

The older he gets, the more readily Jim shreds those caricatures, those accents, those swaggering personas, to bare himself. And there I sit in that idiotic goth bar, wracked by a terrible sense of *finality*. And there you sit in your car, caught in the glare of this man's commitment to truth. To pathology. To . . . hatred.

No recording can touch what a man can say with his eyes. Which is why I bring all this up in the first place: Foetus live. The late-1990 Foetus appearance at San Francisco's Club DNA was the single most satisfying, disturbing show I saw all last year. Worse than watching *Jacob's Ladder* from the front row on fungal hallucinogens, which I'll address at another time. The enormity of his vision was with him, the human frustration, thrust like a prow through the leading wave of his own kind of movie soundtrack. His cover of Alex Harvey's "Faith Healer" was sublime in its aggression. Unmatchable. Jim hunched down at the front of the stage, his eyes turned back inside his head, the gaze sweeping by slowly as his howling faded.

At his best, Thirlwell fucks with your ability to spectate. His psychic-sump compositions have accomplished a feat almost unknown in the age of song/video format: They cough up more ardor, more confrontation, more tears, and more pure hysteria from his own person than from what lays as potential among the multiple instruments in his recordings, or even in a video of that same performance. The sense of finality in his music ain't a product of a bad day in the monstrous warehouse space under the Brooklyn Bridge he used to share with Lydia—it's in *him*. And when he decides to crack it open, you end up carrying it.

NANCY LEOPARDI

You know what I'm talking about. You know how when you go see, say, Rollins, you can see that the guy is on the verge of poppin' a vein, but you feel a distance, like he's using you to get in a great workout? Foetus, live, has pushed past thick emotional barriers . . . to connect . . . at the point of frenzy. Occasionally, someone will call him out and Jim lurches off the stage, boots and knuckles clawing for satisfaction. For release. Foetus has happily discovered the secret to transforming one man's all-night 24-track onanism into an all-absorbing live physical event: Front a loud, complex band, made up mostly of ex-Swans. The last tour, which didn't fall under any of the previously known Foetus monikers, featured guitarist Norman Westberg (Swans), bassist Algys Kizys (Swans), drummer Vinny Corso, violinist Hahn Rowe (Branca, Hugo Largo), and keyboard/guitarist Dave Ouimet. Jim himself admits "the material wasn't composed to be played live."

I've known Jim for a few years, and I suspect that he can't tolerate so much time spent clawing closer and closer to oblivion and thus backs off almost habitually, looking for relief in collaborations and stints as producer. His neurotic "ensconcement" in his home studio is telling. Who can slow this man? Slated for 1991 release are an LP and two mini-LPs under the name Gondwanaland, a series of collaborations with Raymond Watts (PIG), Away (Voivod), Mark Cunningham (Mars, Don King), Lucy Hamilton, Don Fleming (B.A.L.L.), Rowe, Mosimann, and others. A new Wiseblood LP. A Clint Ruin-Lydia Lunch remake of Blue Öyster Cult's "Don't Fear the Reaper." He's committed as well to producing NYC bands The Unsane, Swans, and White Zombie.

And then there's the next Foetus project, where the cycle of pathology begins anew. Jim either jacks it into his deck, or it consumes him. The hound of hell chases his tail. And bites us in the process.

De La Soul

continued from page 55

Indeed it is. Whereas *3 Feet High* offered instant familiarity and warmth, *De La Soul Is Dead* is an entirely deeper affair, less eager to impress with its breadth of reference. Privately, the music Trugoy listens to jogs an interesting gamut, from Edie Brickell to the Happy Mondays to Chris Isaak, but this time around the music does not reflect his eclecticism, drawing instead on sources rooted in more traditional black music. You may start off lamenting the absence of a quick fix, but after three or four listens you will find yourself humming "Bitties in the BK Lounge" or "Pass the P's."

The only obvious chart contender on the new record is "Talkin' 'Bout Hey Love," a pour-some-sugar-awn-me Power FM wet dream with a hook that Captain Ahab would envy. For a sublime minute and a half, the song sounds like this album's L.L. Cool J hit "Around the Way Girl"—before suddenly tailing off into spoken conversation. Intending it only as a "bug-out piece," the group shows an admirably laissez-faire attitude in refusing to tamper with the tune to make it radio-friendly.

"Even if they don't play the record I'm proud of what I'm doin', and that's all I'm worried about," reasons Pos. "Sure, it *counts* if your record gets played, but as long as I'm happy as an individual that's fine."

"People are going to hear it, regardless," drawls De La DJ Pace Master Mase. "Radio play doesn't really mean anything because there's N.W.A and Ice Cube who never really got any airplay, and they've sold more records than we have."

Call it integrity, perversity, or just poor judgment, but this uncompromising stance may ultimately be the key to De La Soul's survival. The solipsism that fuels the band's impenetrable "in" jokes and its often irritating "bug-outs" is the very thing that precludes De La Soul from kowtowing to the record industry's platinum logic. The scent of daisies may have disappeared, but it certainly hasn't been supplanted by the smell of desperation. "We're not worried at all," Pos insists. "Even if for some reason this album doesn't do good—which I doubt—then it's just, 'Okay, that's cool, now we go for the next time.' There never was a time when we wondered what we were gonna do this time around. It's just like we flow—we're constantly makin' new songs."

"This is dedicated to those hard-core acts."
"Yeah, you know them brothers we used to look up to that fell the fuck off."
"And now they're doin' all that R&B shit."
(Polite voice) *"You mean rhythm and blues?"*
(Unison) *"No. Rap and bull* shit."
—introduction to "Afro Connections at a Hi 5 (In the Eyes of a Hoodlum)," De La Soul

THE DE LA DRAMA UNFOLDS BEFORE AN OMINOUS backdrop. Rap's future is currently threatened on so many fronts that last year's censorship debacle looks like a picnic in comparison. Lack of radio play has always been a source of grief to the hip hop community, and with R&B continuing to tone up its muscles the problem can only get worse. Radio programmers are only too willing to cater to mutinous mutterings among rap fans, and if Bell Biv and En Vogue got what you need then all the less reason to air hip hop. And all the *more* reason for rappers to water down their music.

Despite these stacked odds, Posdnuos has confidence in hip hop's powers of endurance. "I don't think it's going to fail, but the situation might pressure a lot of rappers who believe in what they're doing to give in to what they don't wanna do. There are a lot of bad things going on, like your knuckleheads who are very much in tune to hardcore rap, so they mess up all the shows."

Another problem, particularly visible in New York, is the sale of counterfeit tapes on the street. Long a thorn in the side of the record industry, this matter poses the greatest threat to hip hop. "Let's face it," says Pos, "the majority of street rap is sold to black urban teens—people who don't have a lot of money. So they'll end up buying their tapes in the street while the young white girl or guy will have enough money to go to Tower Records or one of the major outlets."

Tommy Boy's Lynch wonders despairingly when the major labels will get with the program and throw some money at the problem, but Prince Paul is willing to hazard a guess. "When they see a Mariah Carey record out there, they'll start to get nervous," he says with a grin.

Others place the blame for rap's present malaise squarely at the dancing feet of one man: Robert Van Winkle, come on down! Many see Vanilla Ice's clumsy misappropriations as diluting an African-American art form, but De La Soul refuses to waste words dissing the lantern-jawed lummox, pausing only to ridicule his hilarious attempts to butch up his bio. However distasteful, though, it has been said that Vanilla Ice and M.C. Hammer are among the few rap artists who have prospered in a live setting—albeit one with roots closer to Broadway than the Bronx. Public Enemy's Brechtian theater of confrontation aside, hip hop acts have failed to fulfill the promise of their studio alchemy when the curtain goes up, and none have been judged more severely than De La Soul, whose stage show—replete with perfunctory "Put your hands in the air" shtick—seriously dented the band's rep as rap mold breaker.

Monica Lynch argues that live hip hop is a case of putting the cart before the horse, with groups thrust onto the boards because of chart success. More disturbing, she sees an inflexible power structure emerging in rap, with multiplatinum Hammers and Ices sitting atop platinum perennials like Public Enemy, then a middle ground of gold-status acts above hundreds of entry-level hopefuls. As more product continues to flood onto the market, the question forms, Just how many more stars can the hip hop audience sustain? On the eve of launching his own Dew Doo Man label, Prince Paul is hip to the realities of the marketplace, but while he feels like the "low man on the totem pole" at Def Jam, his distributor, he believes his acts can be accommodated.

"With anything that's selling well, whether it be music or any item, you expect that there will be a lot of competition," Paul says. "It really doesn't bother me because the consumer knows what's good and what's bad so the good will prevail regardless."

"Babies Makin' Babies" *—Sly Stone*

WHILE BURDENING DE LA SOUL WITH THE crisis in hip hop and the expectation of the next leap forward, it's easy to forget one thing. Posdnuos, Trugoy, and Mase are barely out of their teens. At 22, 21, and 20, respectively, these are young men still hung over from their overnight success, still tender from the grinding of the publicity machine, and Trugoy and Mase now find themselves wrestling with the responsibilities of parenthood.

But even as Prince Paul darkly alludes to hip hop's inevitable creative bankruptcy, hinting that some new form must emerge to satisfy the hungry intellects of underground fans, De La Soul is keeping the faith.

"Rap does get the downplay," says Trugoy, "but we all still hangin' in there. We won't let it break down."

"Still, it's not *fun* like it used to be," reflects Mase, in accord with the current nostalgia for rap's early days. Can it be that it was all so simple then? "Yes," says Trugoy. "Back in those days you could go to a party and just get on the mike, but now it's basically just work. Work and rules. You realize that it's something you gotta do if you wanna keep those dollars rolling. And that's what it's about, makin' money. It's just a job like any other."

"It's up to us as individuals to make it fun," states Mase. "Amongst ourselves we can still do that."

Though innocence may be, all is not lost.

The solipsism that fuels the band's impenetrable "in" jokes and its often irritating "bug-outs" is the very thing that precludes De La Soul from kowtowing to the record industry's platinum logic.

Lenny Kravitz

continued from page 39

plains. "I'm not saying I shouldn't practice what I preach—I should. But at least I did something, I used my position to influence others."

Personally, I'm proud of my voting record. If something like Mothra, Godzilla's mothlike foe, should stand for election in New York City, I will, no doubt, vote. Whether for or against him, it is still much too early to say. Otherwise, I refuse to go to the polls. I discard my constitutional right because of my deeply held conviction that the annual voting ritual is the sole mechanism by which we approve of the choices we're given. And as my grandmother used to say, Why give your enemies the satisfaction? Lenny appears to think this over, then pulls a face. "Nah," he says, "MTV would never go for it."

War Casualties

continued from page 69

wooden chuck, like those stuck behind the tires of an 18-wheeler, was wedged under his sagging skull. His upper lip was crudely stitched together, his hands forced to look relaxed at his side. A clean, folded American flag sat on a rack beneath his gurney.

John Prince, a stocky, amiable mortician, unscrewed a vial and began brushing rouge on the dead man's cheeks. It would be several hours before the face was sufficiently painted and groomed to be shipped to his family.

Behind me, another Army corpse stared resolutely while Chris, a young mortician and house painter, casually rebuilt his face. "Had to sew the face together in fourteen places," he told me as if he'd broken a record. "Most people, they have their flags and their yellow ribbons, but I feel like I'm doing something really special," he said, swirling paint on a palette, looking for the perfect flesh-skin color.

Behind Chris sat a counter ladened with a Frankenstein-like combination of beauty products and embalmer's tools. A bottle of shampoo and a can of hair spray sat next to an array of scalpels and what looked like drill bits. Bottles of Permaglow sat half-empty.

A traffic jam formed in the hallway. Three more bodies had just arrived to join the dozen lingering behind the double doors. Another 27 soldiers had been half-cremated by an Iraqi Scud missile attack; no one was going home early today.

I gazed at one soldier's nearly intact sculpted body: Looks like a weight lifter, I thought. Those robust, naked thighs could have belonged to a NFL running back; his brawny arms were inlaid with braided muscles. But this bulk was fragile compared to whatever cleaved his right torso. Football-sized chunks of flesh had been torn away. Tattered scraps were all that remained of his right forearm. Pea-sized burn holes splotched

continued on page 84

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Hyundai Motor America and SPIN Magazine are happy to announce the grand prize winner of the "Hyundai College Music Tour Sweepstakes" which took place in the fall of 1990. Congratulations to **Aretha L. Johnson** of Detroit, Michigan, who is the proud new owner of a 1991 Hyundai Scoupe.

We would also like to congratulate the 105 qualifying runners-up.

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Robert Arnas	Cecilia Dominguez	Michael Janson	Sue McCormack	Darran Schutte
Erik Andersen	Jennifer Flores	Hugh Jarvis	Audria McMullins	John Sauryncie
Mike Basso	Cindy Fritchley	Aretha L. Johnson	John P. Mitchell	Felicia LaShane Shelby
Jamie Betley	Steve Funanich	Katie Joyce	Erica T. Miller	DeAndrea L. Sims
Maggie M. Bennett	Peter A. Fusco	Tim Kilpatrick	Caroline F. Mora	Bryan Slattery
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All runners-up received a SPIN gift package containing one gift certificate for Airwalk Desert Boots, one pair of X-Isle sunglasses, one pair of Marithé & Francois Girbaud jeans, and a Virgin Records cassette featuring selections from Hyundai tour star Iggy Pop's latest album *Brick by Brick*

Once again, we would like to congratulate all of the winners and thank everyone who participated for their interest and support.

War Casualties

continued from page 83

the skin from his armpit to his hip. I could scarcely look at his face. Instead of a mouth, there was a hole big enough to fit a baseball. His lips and tongue were peeled off and stuck to his throat. There were no teeth.

He would be rebuilt. The family would have only a vague suspicion about the violence that rocked their son's body. But another corpse was proving more difficult for the assembled embalmers and morticians.

"They can't find his head," one employee told me. "They've been looking since Saturday." Before I could ask where they were looking or who had lost it, I was whisked away.

Ultimately, when I was asked to help restore the torn face of an Army private, I decided the gig was up and invented an excuse to leave.

It was only one in the afternoon, but I'd seen enough and heard enough to permanently etch these tortured images into my memory.

I also got a story.

I found one employee, who asked to remain anonymous, willing to discuss casualty numbers. Her job is to log the names, dates, details of death, and hometowns of the fallen soldiers for the mortuary's bookkeeping. Her accounting is not the direct basis for the Pentagon's official figures, but each name she logged into her computer came with a body. "When they aren't on TV," she whispered to me, "they say the death was a 'training accident.' " She said the true combat death figure was "about 200" as of Wednesday, February 28. As of March 8, the official Department of Defense fatality figures for both Desert Storm and Desert Shield were 306, with only 122 deaths listed as combat-related.

When asked about the discrepancy, Susan Hansen, a spokesperson for the Pentagon, admitted that "there very well could be isolated examples of this—where people could be listed as killed in hostile action and later determined they were not engaged in, or vice versa." But she insisted that for Desert Storm such instances were few: "One or two—not in large numbers." Asked if the military automatically classifies fatalities in which the cause of death is unclear as training accidents, she said, "There very well may have been one or two incidents that have been changed as more circumstances have become known, but we're talking about a very large organization here."

Has the military once again misrepresented the number of casualties to downplay our losses in the Gulf? It's not that the extra combat casualties change the morality or immorality of war—or the severity of its effects: The death of a soldier, whether it's by hostile or "friendly" fire, whether it occurs on the front lines in hand-to-hand combat or results from an accident during a routine training maneuver, brings the same heartrending loss to the soldier's family and friends. The real question is why our government believes that lying to the American public during wartime is an acceptable political strategy.

But then again, why should wartime be any different from peacetime?

AZT

continued from page 66

dogmatic view: namely that somehow HIV kills the T-cells after attaching its GP 120 [a viral envelope]. It was very, very simplified. And hence it was hastily concluded that what we needed was an antiviral agent [e.g., AZT]. I think that even the greatest advocates of HIV no longer believe in 1991 that HIV by itself does all that damage to the immune system. There are many cofactors. Not necessarily other infectious agents. The ACTG leadership shows little interest in cofactors, in spite of the fact that both Dr. Robert Gallo and Dr. Luc Montagnier have strongly come out in favor of cofactors, in the form of HHV-6 [another virus] and a newly discovered microplasma agent, respectively. Meanwhile, I think people are shifting away from all this old dogma. Not in treatment, but in pathogenesis and discussion. The ACTG is still stuck in the mire of "we need an antiviral to suppress HIV." And other ideas get very short shrift or are dismissed.

SPIN: Do you think that AZT, in the long run, has done more harm than good? You've said in the past that the marginal positive effect that AZT has had on patients may be due to its anti-inflammatory effect, which a simple drug such as acetominophen or even aspirin might have achieved without the toxicity. Do you still feel that way?

LANGE: Yes, I still feel that way. I think that AZT as a scientific development is not wrong. It's the political brouhaha that was built around a drug that from the very beginning was a mediocre drug, and should have been handled as such. Too much of the decision-making in the ACTG as to the priority of drugs to be tested in clinical trials appears to be made behind closed doors. I was told by people at the NIH, as early as 1986, "Well, this [AZT] is only the beginning, we'll have three or four more drugs a year from now." But what do we have in 1991? AZT. There are many things that have an anti HIV effect in the test tube. Why was AZT selected the way it was? Millions invested in testing it when it was considered too toxic even as a chemotherapy agent. Why was it taken from the shelf where it had sat since the 1960s and made the absolute—and pushed as being almost a cure?" And it still is if you look at these subway ads. The interconnection of drug company advertising with the NIH, building this drug into something which it clearly is not, has been very, very harmful. It has delayed the development of new drugs, it has delayed the exploration of other ideas when the evidence was already there that they should be looked at. I mean, now people are willing to look at them because they know that AZT isn't worth too much. But they should have been looked at in 1987. We lost, essentially, three and a half valuable years because all the marbles were put on AZT.

SPIN: Do you think people have been killed by AZT?

LANGE: Well, that's a difficult question. People have had very strong toxic reactions, and there are those who may have died a few months earlier due to those toxic reactions. There are certainly a lot of people whose last few months were made more miserable by AZT, particularly at the higher dose. On the other hand, I can't deny that there have been people with very high fevers which disappeared when given AZT and they felt clinically better. This doesn't mean their disease improved, but they felt better. And that's really the one big plus that AZT offers some people. There's no doubt about that. But it doesn't last. The interesting thing is that at last year's hearing—the review of 019 and 016—I sat up on the stage as a consultant to the antiviral committee and Dr. David Barry from Burroughs-Wellcome was in front of the stage, and he said to me that they had never claimed that AZT prolonged life, only that it improved the quality of life. This was after I pointed out that the effect of AZT wears off after six months, and that there is no evidence that it makes people live longer. Clearly, this is in direct contrast to the message in the subway ads.

SPIN: You've taken a lot of heat for your criticisms of AZT. What does that say about the state of the medical establishment today?

LANGE: I think that if you practice medicine and you're a clinician the traditional role is to be the advocate of your patient. You're not a hireling of the hospital, you're not a hireling of the university, you're not a hireling of the government or a drug company. Even though many people feel it's old fashioned, there is such a thing as the Hippocratic oath and medical ethics. The reason people come to a doctor is that they want a feeling of trust. They entrust their life to the doctor. I think, naturally, in the role of a doctor, there is a built-in role of potential conflict with institutions. Government institutions, hospitals, and universities are essentially businesses. They have to have a bottom line and so on. But as a physician you are the advocate of your patient, trying to get the best for him or her out of the system. I'm an academic doctor, I'm an associate professor at a major medical school. I could never with a clear conscience convince myself—and I've reviewed all the articles on AZT many times—that AZT is a very useful drug. There were certain clinical situations where I would try it and did try it. But as I've said, I think that the beneficial effects—a better sense of well-being and so on—are short-lived. The desired aim with AZT was to make AIDS a chronic disease: Will people live longer than two years following their first episode of PCP? There is no data I have evaluated which has proved to me satisfactorily that AZT can do so. I have had a big conflict. Having been put in a corner I've thought, Well, am I going to just give in here, to various pressures, and can I live with my own conscience doing so? And I decided no, I can't. I have had some patients who've wanted to take AZT after I've discussed the pros and cons, and in those cases I've prescribed it—it *is* the patient's life. It is his or her decision. It is the doctor's duty to inform. You, the doctor, based on how thoroughly you present the information about a treatment, are the one who is making a decision about this particular patient's life and death. Your job as a doctor is to stay on top of the literature, stay well-informed, read it, weigh the pros and cons, weigh the evidence, just like a lawyer, and act to the best of your ability. I did that, and I could not convince myself that the use of AZT in its present indications is justified.

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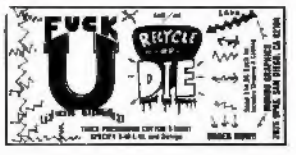

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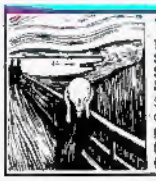

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Cool Sex

S&M

If you don't submit to this article by MICHAEL MUSTO, you will be spanked.

S&M IS SO UNBELIEVABLY COOL, IN THE chilly sense at least. You emerge from it totally unattached (unless you count the bed you're chained to, the toilet bowl you're tied to, the pole you're wrapped around). You leave it with no commitment, except to somehow find the key to those handcuffs or to get out of that vise in a way that won't permanently splinter your face. You share no emotions except for the put-on ones of anger/fear, surliness/submission, relentlessness/vulnerability, and then you simply toss them off like the clamps attached to your body parts. And you don't have to apologize for anything you said; you didn't *mean* all those things about your lover being the scum of the earth who doesn't deserve to lick the dog doo from under Hitler's boots and/or fellate Neil Sedaka. In fact, since your lover begged you to say them, you should be expecting a big thank-you card in the mail.

An S&M act, it seems, can take place without any actual touching or cuddling—no fore- and after-play, no cocktail appetizer or cigarette dessert. It blasts clichés out the bedroom window with its refusal to deal in the banal rituals of intercourse, the limited menu of push-me-pull-you calisthenics. It *is* a ritual unto itself—a scripted scenario that seems so potentially alienating it bizarrely draws you closer into it.

One doesn't picture the act having the same dynamics as ordinary (I won't say *normal*) sex. It doesn't really build, does it? You just hook yourself to some kind of device and slap or get slapped—slam bam thank you ma'am, as it were. Cooler still, in clubs like New York's Zone DK or the Vault, S&M participants thrive on an audience—witness the intent crowd gathering around the shoe lickers, a better show than anything on Broadway lately. This look-at-us-we're-being-bad quality not only tends to redefine the phrase *drama queen*, it emphasizes the fact that S&M seems like more of a pose than anything involving the missionary position. It relies more heavily on acting and all the concomitant lighting, props, costumes, role-playing, and stage directions. The net effect is theater.

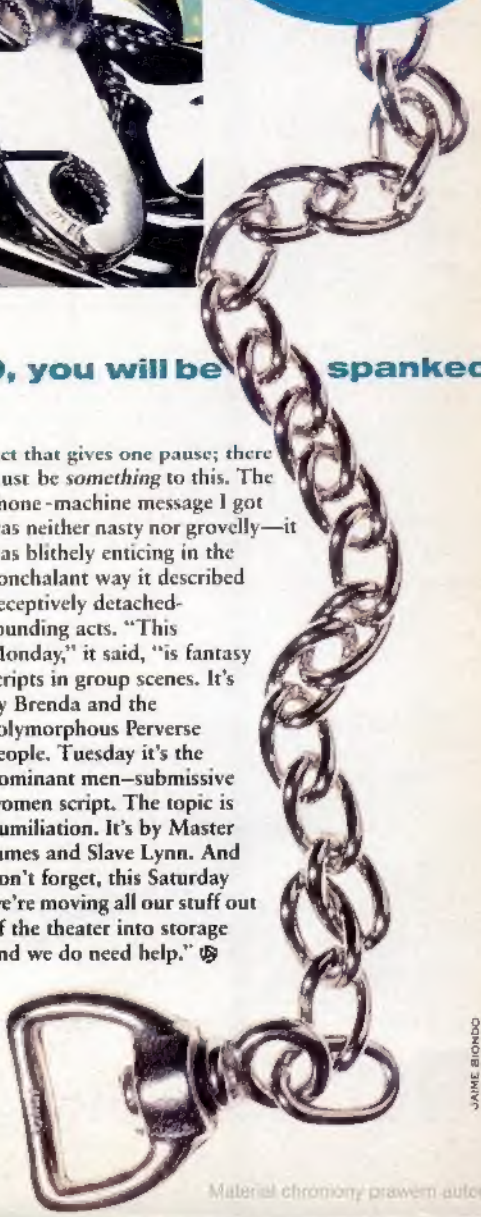
But hold on to that rack a minute. Is that all true, or is it just a myth invented by people who only know about S&M from Brigitte Nielsen movies? There's a growing legion of committed S&M enthusiasts who feel that the chilly aura that's been placed around their life-style is as grossly exaggerated as the idea that mere in-out motions are romantic. You *can* still fall in love with a master or slave just as easily as you can a doctor or lawyer. You *do* hear strings when someone screams at you, "Whip me, beat me, make me watch *Murphy Brown*." You *do* share with the person, build with them, sense their needs and modulate the act as it goes along. And with S&M there may be an even deeper trust involved than in ordinary sex. You'd *better* trust that woman who's pinning you to that rack and shaking hot pokers toward your butt.

"S&M is not detached at all," says a friend of mine who would definitely know. "It's the most personal sex you can have. It can be the most frightening thing in the world if you don't trust the other person, but if you do, it's the biggest honor."

While you *are* playing a part in S&M, he insists, it's a part that's you—not a contrivance. Besides, ordinary sex is a matter of role-playing too; usually someone's on top being dominant and someone's on the bottom being submissive. There's both intimacy and affectation in any kind of sex.

Still, I'm not willing to unshackle myself that readily of the exotic, decadent image of S&M as the only type of sexual act that *is* an act—the life-style choice that's cool from the feel of the cat-o'-nine-tails to the way your heart wasn't broken, even if your neck almost was.

Fascinated, I called the Eulenspiegel Society—for those with an interest in dominance and submissive role-playing, life-styles, and fantasies. The society is enjoying its 20th anniversary, a fact that gives one pause; there must be *something* to this. The phone-machine message I got was neither nasty nor grovelly—it was blithely enticing in the nonchalant way it described deceptively detached-sounding acts. "This Monday," it said, "is fantasy scripts in group scenes. It's by Brenda and the Polymorphous Perverse People. Tuesday it's the dominant men–submissive women script. The topic is humiliation. It's by Master James and Slave Lynn. And don't forget, this Saturday we're moving all our stuff out of the theater into storage and we do need help." ⊕



JAIME BIONDO

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